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3

REVENGE,

OR

THE NOVICE OF SAN MARTINO,

A TRAGEDY.

BY MAJOR BROOK BRIDGES PARLBY,

Of the Hon. East-India Company's Service.

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} *Nuns.*

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Time supposed to elapse during the course of the action about thirty hours.

[illegible]

PARADE

REVENGE, *page 3*

Enter all monks &

OR

THE NOVICE OF SAN MARTINO.

A C T I.

SCENE I.

The Chapel of the Convent of San Martino.

(As the curtain rises lights are seen through the windows of painted glass. The organ sounds, and the vesper hymn is chaunted at intervals. FLORIAN, who was concealed behind one of the pillars, comes gradually forward during the performance of the hymn. The front of the stage darkened.)

THE busy race of day is done,
The sun his golden course hath run
And sunk beneath the wave ;
[Dun night her banner hath unfurl'd,]
And sleep hath spread o'er half the world,
The silence of the grave.

Oh, may we so our days employ,
 As in the sleep of death to joy,
 The symbol of our rest ;
 Rememb'ring that the righteous dies,
 In sure and certain hope to rise,
 With glory 'mongst the blest.

FLORIAN *comes forward with a letter in his hand.*

This is the place Olivia named, the hour appointed.
 Sure the deep gloom that shrouds these ancient aisles,
 Has shed its influence o'er my drooping spirit.
 Does listless torpor suit with the occasion,
 When even-handed fate her feathered balance holds,
 Apt for bold enterprize, or sloth inert ?
 When by the very deed and purpose of my mind,
 My all's restored, or lost to me for ever ?
 Ye pitying pow'rs, that watch o'er faithful love,
 Oppose a father, whose ambitious daring
 Would tear asunder two devoted hearts,
 And force his child, a sad unwilling victim,
 To utter vows abhorrent to her soul.

[Goes to a marble pillar, and places the letter in the hollow of it.]

Thou silent messenger, if thou couldst but impart
 A thousandth portion of th' impatient ardor
 That burns with thy inditer, each character should be
 A spear of fire to strike down all opponents,
 And thy bright eloquence should sound a larum
 On the slackened ear of moody deafness.

[The chorus is again heard from the chapel.]

'Gainst guilty thoughts the barrier close,
 While our frail bodies take repose
 Beneath thy sheltering wing :

And wak'd each morn in holy frame,
May hearts accord, while lips proclaim,
Hosannah to our King.

[*Lights appear in the back of the scene.*

FLO. Love moves with lingering pace
When from the heart's dear idol parting.

[*The convent bell tolls.*

But hark, I must retire.

40

Olivia, soon may this slowly-swinging bell
Or hail thee mine, or sound my passing knell.

[*He withdraws.*

The Prioress, Nuns, &c. pass over the stage, OLIVIA last. She loiters behind the rest and comes forward.

OLIV. Oh that this swelling heart would burst its
fleshy bonds,
And loose a wretch who lives but to despair.
These cloister'd walls bear witness to my groans,
These holy steps are water'd with my tears ;
And as I nightly press my couch of straw,
No whisp'ring seraph breathes the notes of peace,
But the deep sigh, forc'd from my laboring breast,
Mournfully echoed thro' the vaulted cell,
Repeats anew to my unwilling ear,
Tidings of sad interminable woe.—
Florian, dear Florian, would I had seen thee never.
Or, having seen thee, that 'twere possible,
With some oblivious draught, poppy or hemlock,
Drowsy mandragora, or Lethe's clouded stream,
To sweep from this fond, foolish, lovesick bosom,
All traces, records, and false lingering hopes,
That memory loves to feed on.

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[To this stern sacrifice cold prudence bids ;]
 Yet, like the moth that flutters round the flame,
 I fly to that which shines but to undo me,
 And from its marble prison draw the hoarded prize,
 Welcome as cheering blaze midst Zembla's snows.

*[She stoops and takes up the letter, which she opens
 and runs over to herself.]*

Rest there, brief pledge of truth and constancy,

[Putting the letter in her bosom.]

Where he that trac'd thee will for ever dwell.
 Come back my scattered thoughts, aid me ye counsellors,
 Whose bright intelligence can pierce the mists of error,
 And in the very strife of angry passions,
 Opposing reason's shield, bid all be still. 70
 How best to steer in this dark sea I know not,
 Here love, in whispers soothing to the soul,
 With honied accents woes my softened heart.
 Obedience there, in icy mantle clad,
 His frozen wand displays ; and at his nod,
 The rising thought, with dreams of rapture warm'd,
 Recoils upon itself, and starting, shews
 The deadly halo of a father's curse.
 I ken no succour till that grizly king,
 Whose outstretch'd jaws for ever wait their prey, 80
 Shall seize this form for worms to revel on,
 And from its prison loose my troubled spirit.

Enter Father ANGELO.

ANG. (*aside.*) Revenge, thou art a harpy, whose foul
 ravenous claw
 Delights to pounce upon the daintiest morsels : else why
 this quickening pulse
 At sight of yonder maid ? Hold ! think upon her house—

(*Aloud.*) Save thee, daughter. These lengthened vigils
Do well bespeak the pious inclination,
That leads thee to prefer our church's service
To [the vain pleasures of a giddy world.] or 54
Our sisterhood the passing hours beguile 90
In social converse, whilst thou alone art found
The pensive tenant of these sober walls,
Fit haunt for holy meditation.
I hail these fair and prosperous beginnings;
And if I augur well, seed sown thus early
Shall yield a glorious harvest.

OLIV. Reverend father,
The awful tie, that to our holy church
Must soon unite me, well may claim
Large portion of my thoughts. And yet
Methinks I read thy meek and lowly words,
Gently rebuke me for thus ling'ring here
(A place unseemly for a tender maid),
When [night and solemn silence reign around.] 100

ANG. Not so, my daughter. Better far I deem
The humblest footstool in these hallowed courts,
Than on the throne of ermin'd majesty to sit,
Mingling in wanton wake and revelry.
If that my counsels can avail thee ought,
Freely demand, what gladly I'll bestow. 110
(*Aside.*) Her [silvery tones seem music to my ear;] 5
In eloquence more apt than tongue can tell,
These [plaintive lengthen'd melancholy notes convey
The stifled anguish of a stricken heart.] 120

OLIV. (*aside.*) Time moves apace; 'twere best I
leave him.
(*Aloud.*) Father, I'll chuse a more convenient season
To ask thy ghostly counsels, now farewell;

Duty instructs me promptly to withdraw.
 When his rapt soul's on heav'nly converse bent,
 'Twere most unseemly thus to interrupt
 Our people's idol, and our church's pride.

[As she is retiring she drops the letter.]

ANG. (*solus.*) How? said she, "our people's idol, and
 our church's pride,"

Twice twenty thousand tongues proclaim the same,
 Such is the lofty eminence I stand on.—
 Ha, what's this—

[As he is looking after her, he sees and picks up the letter.]

Ho—daughter!

This purports to be—

*[She runs in, and seeing the letter open, shrieks,
 and flies to regain it.]*

OLIV. 'Tis mine.

ANG. (*still holding the letter, aside.*) Whence this
 emotion?

(*Aloud.*) Hold; not so fast—

OLIV. For pity's sake restore it.—Indeed, its mine! 150

ANG. Nay, daughter, 'tis fit I read this paper.

OLIV. Then,—I am lost,—for ever.

*[She holds by one of the pillars, to save herself
 from sinking on the floor.]*

ANG. (*reads the letter with violent emotion.*)

"How can I impart to my sweet love the cruelty her
 father meditates. He has resolved on forcing her to
 take the veil—the unfeeling Abbess is his creature—
 This very night the sordid Milan is expected; and to
 your sister's elevation, and your father's ambition, you
 are to be the devoted sacrifice. I hear it from one
 whose veracity is like gold tried in the furnace. One
 remedy alone is in your power. Fly, fly from their 150

“ tyranny, my Olivia. I have arranged all the means of
“ flight, and if you can give me a minute’s hearing after
“ matins to-morrow, I will explain them. If you he-
“ sitate on this only alternative you are lost, but I cling
“ to it as one who watches the varying countenance of
“ a dying friend, fondly straining at the slightest glim-
“ mering of hope. You have to chuse between being
“ immured in a cloister, where even a thought of our
“ past love will be a crime, or uniting your destiny
“ with that of

150

“ Your faithful, adoring, and constant lover.”

(*Aside.*) Oh, I could hug thee, vengeance.—’Tis a glo-
rious work,

When angel smiles light up thy ghastly cheek,
And the rude rabble greet thy handy work,
For the pure dictates of a guileless heart.

(*Aloud.*) I have a solemn duty to discharge,
And must obey its mandates.—First to the Prioress.

OLIV. (*throws herself on her knees and seizes his robe.*)
Stay;—if e’er thy heart felt pity, stay.

ANG. (*aside.*) What newborn impulse thus distracts
my thoughts,

As ’twere in mockery of the fixed purpose,
That should be graven on my very soul.

160

(*Aloud.*) Say—what wouldst thou have?—

OLIV. Compassion for a woman’s weakness,
Concealment for a woman’s frailty;
This boon obtained, trust me [my days shall be
In penitent and contrite wailings spent,]
Of this my transient crime; my first, my single fault.—
Thus shall I ’scape an angry father’s wrath, and thou,
Gently reclaim a wandering soul to heav’n.

ANG. But that I’ve heard ’tis vice’s favorite handmaid,

170

Such matchless confidence would much amaze me.

[Shall I thus wink at prurient harlotry ;]

See guilt uncoif'd stalk thro' our peaceful cells,

And call such weak forbearance mercy ?

No, justice shall have its due. 'Twere better far

Thy body suffer that thy soul may live,

Than I, thus made associate of thy crime,

Should render both to bottomless perdition.

Away,—nor stay my course.

OLIV. Father,—one moment,—nay, but a moment
hear me.

ANG. [Twas with such witching guile the tempter stay'd
Our fair first mother,] she listened, and she fell.

Away.—I'll hear no more.—What, ho,

Where is the Lady Prioress ?

OLIV. [Proud in the triumph of unsullied virtue,
The brazen bulwark of a spotless conscience,

Be not inflexible to a suppliant's prayer,

Nor shut out pity from its native seat.

As thou dost hope for mercy, shew it me ;

So may'st thou find it, at thy utmost need.

Restore the letter, nor doom me to destruction.

ANG. (*aside.*) The very look her sainted mother bore :

But pity shall not quench the thirst of feverish hate.

(*Aloud.*) Thy hardihood confounds me.

What dost thou ask for ?

Shall I conceal your crime ? I, whom

Your feigned composure had deceived ? No, daughter, no ;

In spite of the arch fiend, nay, in your own despite,

I'll stretch a saving arm 'twixt you and ruin.—

What, ho,—Where is the Lady Prioress ?

OLIV. By every tie that Nature hath implanted,

If e'er your heart hath yearn'd towards her that bore you.

ANG. Release me,—I will not,—must not, hear you.
Where is the Prioress?—Lady, Where are you?

[*The door opens, and the Prioress, Emilia, and several Nuns enter with lights.*

OLIV. Cruel! unfeeling man!—

[*She lets go his robe and throws herself on the ground.*

PRIO. What rash intruder dares to interrupt
The silent course of night, with noise unseemly?
Father, I cry your mercy.—Olivia here!—
(*To Ang.*) Had it been ought but you, [the place, the
time,

Might have giv'n rise to foul-mouth'd slander.] 210

ANG. Lady, 'twere meet I briefly do explain.
Our holy calling hath impos'd a duty,
Nor will I shrink from its fulfilment.
As here I walk'd, so oft I'm wont at even,
On pious exercises bent, (then best perform'd,
When closely veil'd from all impure beholders,)
Yon wayward maiden cross'd my thoughtful steps.
Short time we parlied; when, as she retired,
This paper (justice o'ertake its author) from her fell.
I deem'd it haply from some kinsfolk greeting;
And call'd her back, as courtesy demanded,
The truant to restore; when, on the instant,
With sudden shriek, and terror speaking eye,
She cried, "'Tis mine! for pity's sake restore it."
I, as I judg'd such strange emotion
The harbinger of hidden guilt, did, as my office fits,
Peruse the writing.—'Twill unfold the rest.—

[*Reads the letter to the Prioress.—While reading it she clasps her hands, stamps, and then runs to Olivia, pointing with her finger as she lies prostrate on the ground.*

PRIO. [Are these thy hated wiles,
Thou snary, subtle, slippery serpent?—]
Oh foul, foul, foul.

Let me strip off this badge of innocence,
That clokes thy scarlet heart. [Seizes her veil.

ANG. (*holding her.*) Stop, lady, let not abhorrence of
the deed,
Confound itself with outrage to the doer.

PRIO. How?—And does virtue's boldest champion
stoop to plead
For vice abhorred?—Shall I stand tamely by,
And see my house defiled? Mine, once so fam'd
For vestal sanctity, now humbled to the dust.—

EMIL. (*aside.*) In sooth, this violence of unbridled
passion,
But ill accords with meek Religion's handmaid.—
(*Aloud.*) Madam, our sister, but in thought transgressor,
May look with horror on a deed of shame.—

PRIO. (*ironically.*) Ah! plead for her you ought to
blush to look on—
And you, most reverend Father, join your eloquence.
'Twere meet to advocate the shrine polluted,
The broken vow, the spirit fix'd on Mammon,
When beauty is the sufferer!!! Away with her to the
convent.

OLIV. Then every hope is lost.—Already
Do fearful visions swim before my eyes,
Portentous of the horrid doom that waits me.—
Florian where are you? Save me,
Oh from destruction save me.

PRIO. Dost thou invoke a foul adulterer's aid?
Away with the prophane, the sinful wretch.

OLIV. (*To Ang.*) Hear me, thou man of blood; to
thee I speak,

Proud, stern, unfeeling, cruel as thou art !
 Had but one ray of pity touch'd thy soul,
 'Twas thine to lead a weary wanderer back,
 Midst the still waters and the pastures green,
 To bless thy aid, and humbly walk with God.— 260
 Not so thy counsel. In the pride of virtue,
 Unshaken cause untempted, [nought avail'd to move
 Thy iron heart,] and like a loathsome thing, = unfeeling
 Thou shook'st the trembling weeping suppliant off,
 To seek from Heav'n the boon denied by thee.
 But mark !—Thy day of trial, tho' delay'd shall come ;
 Then, when fierce passions tear thy inmost soul,
 When thou shalt feel that man is heir to frailty, *human*
 When a long line of unrepented crimes
 Shall rise in terrible array against thee, 270
 When shuddering at thy guilt, beyond all human aid,
 Thy supplicating eye scarce dare look up for mercy,
 Wak'd from her trance let conscience smite thy breast,
 And in that fearful moment think on me.

[*She is carried off by the Nuns.*

ANG. (*aside.*) In truth, I could repay thee scorn for
 scorn ;

Yet, for my motives might beget suspicion,
 I darn't give utterance to the thoughts that move me.

[*He follows the Prioress and detains her.*

PRIOR. Such is the certain recompence that waits
 On goodness, when the softened heart would sway
 From its true course the steady arm of justice. 280

'Tis well with black opprobrium thus to load
 A life so pure, the piercing eye of malice
 Could never yet spy out a flaw to cavil at.

ANG. Hold. The best are thickly studded o'er with
 error,

Such is the tenure of mortality.

[There's nought that is deceitful as the heart.]
Haply some inborn pride, some passion unsubdued,
Required this sharp corrective.] Then let me take the
cup

With humble thanks. 'Tis physick to the soul.

PRIO. This self-distrust, in you so angel like,
But stains with blacker die Olivia's guilt.

ANG. Lady, 'twould seem as tho' such fixed despair
Did mark a mind not quite estranged from virtue.
Might I advise, I'd bate the law's hard sentence,
Nor rigidly exact the custom'd penance.
For when with heav'n born mercy somewhat tempered,
Then justice doth ever shew itself most godlike.

PRIO. No, father, not the smallest jot, believe me.
Severe and rigid are our convent's laws :
Too long they have slumbered ; but th'occasion proves
'Tis needful to revive them. Olivia first shall stand
A sample of the retribution due

To slighted vows, and to insulted heav'n. [Exit.

ANG. (solus.) 'Tis well. I have done my duty. Will
not the city say so ?

Then whence proceeds this strange and rare commotion ;
Whence comes the strict inquisitor that seems to ask

“ What was thy motive, Angelo ? What, wouldst thou
“ visit

“ On this unhappy innocent another's guilt ? ”

Conscience, thou bright unerring monitor,
I dare not probe thee further. 'Tis thus we stifle

The silent eloquence of heav'n's vicegerent,
Virtue's first advocate and vice's deadliest foe ;
At once, the witness and the judge of crime.

Had he, the first who smote his fellow, heeded
Thy still, small voice, he had not slain a brother. [Exit.

SCENE II.

A Room in Florian's House.

Enter FLORIAN and BONARIO.

BON. (*Speaking as he is entering.*) On pithy emprise
bent, and I forbad to tend thee?

Sure my young lord but gibes his ancient liegeman.

Was it for this I watch'd his infant cradle,

Joy'd o'er his youth, and view'd with honest pride,

Glory's bright star dawn on his ripening manhood?

FLO. I have no time to waste in tedious converse.

'Tis the account I make of you that sways me,

The deeds I purpose suit not sober age.

BON. Oh say not thus, can age destroy affection,

Or years efface the grateful homage due thee?

I do remember, ('twas a mortal strife,

As if a single arm could poise the scale,

Each hand to hand sought victory or death),

Bleeding I fell beneath the fiery Gaul,

Th' uplifted spear on fatal deed intent,

When, as the vast waters of impetuous Po,

Swoln by the mountain torrent roll along,

Thou, chief in fame the lion of the fight,

Rush'd on the towering foe, and hurled him down,

Whilst big with ardent hope, to swift destruction.

FLO. No more of this.—Tenfold thou hast o'erpaid

The happy chance that sent this arm to aid thee,

With faithfulservice, and with honest zeal.

BON. Service! nay, good my lord,

Say, duty, obligation, or sworn fealty;

Midst all the varied terms that language boasts,
Call it by any worthier name than service.

FLO. My friend forgive me the ungracious word;
Nor deem a crooked and ill nurtur'd spirit
Was parent to the thought.

From the same font my honor'd mother drew,
The generous stream purples thy lusty veins,
And in the dower of a noble mind,
Bids fortune's meaner honors shrink abash'd.

BON. My dear young lord, (*weeps*) Forgive an old
man's weakness;
You've touch'd the tenderest chord this heart retains.
As [the untutor'd harp, swept by some passing breeze,
With wild aerial measure swells the gale,]
So memory wakened by thy mother's name,
From nature claims the tribute of a tear.
But to the mark.—You must not, will not, cannot bid
me part.

Say I may follow, and I ask no more.

FLO. Bonario, you little guess the thing you ask for,
And knowing it, would shudder at your suit.
There is a secret, dark, mysterious pow'r,
That claims dominion o'er each Christian state;
And in the tyranny of unbridled rule, asserts
Its gloomy empire even o'er our thoughts.
Suppose some wayward, some untoward fate
Has crossed my destiny?—suppose I'm called on
To war with superstition's fearful child,
Combat opinion nurs'd in early youth,
And hazard life, if vengeance chance to wake,
That foiling her, I may be doubly blest!

BON. What do I hear? can this be good Rosalba!
Cease, aged knees, cease from this angry strife;

And back thou ebbing tide that rushing to the heart,
In mockery of these colourless and withered cheeks,
Wouldst blazon forth the dread that palls my soul.
Would I had stood on *Ætna's* fiery brink,
Or naked plung'd neath *Dwinia's* ice-bound wave,
Or ever I had heard these fatal words.

FLO. Said I not well, " my purpose suits not thee ? "
Why didst thou seek to draw the veil that hid
Designs ill meet for slow, considerate age ?
Infirm of body, cautious grown by years,
Hast thou to do with emprise that might shake
The bold resolve that dwells with manly prime ?

BON. If faithful, constant, and long tried affection
Give claim to confidence, and right to share in peril,
I fearless challenge both ! Think'st thou, young lord,
'Tis chains or scourges, wheels or racks I fear :
No, learn to know me better.—Let but this dark design,
Lost or accomplish'd, leave no scorpion here ;

[*Pointing to his breast.*

And be it life or death, I'll follow thee.

FLO. Shall I return attachment, such as thine,
By pointing thee the path that leads to danger ?

BON. I fear it not, so conscience lead our way.
Once more I claim admittance to thy councils.
Bonario has not lived so long, to basely cherish
The feeble remnants of a tottering frame,
So they be justly, honorably spent ;
And better deems pain, sufferance, corporal wound,
Than that the slightest scar deform the mind.

FLO. My faithful friend ! I'll waste not time in thanks,
Then doubly precious when ingrafted here.

[*Lays his hand on his heart.*

Then ardent zeal demands a better recompence,]

Than to involve these reverend locks in peril.
But be thy will my law.—First I adjure thee,
By life, by death, by all thy hopes of heaven;
By those sweet thoughts that soar beyond the grave;
By all the immortal myriads that behold us;
Be each word, letter, particle I tell thee,
In solemn secrecy for ever clos'd.

BON. I swear.—

By this untainted blade I swear, (*Drawing his sword.*)
(Nor nobler oath can bind a soldier's lips),
Never this secret to reveal.

FLO. Amen.—Now to our purpose.—So far to try thee
Have I essay'd; and nobly hast thou prov'd
The sterling ore and charter of thy soul.
In playful infancy and blameless youth, thou'st seen
Stern Carantani's daughter, sweet Olivia,
Alike loving and beloved by all:
But chief by me, who long have pin'd to graft
This tender scion on my ruder stock.
Nor heard the gentle maid my suit unmov'd;
But with retiring look and downcast eye,
Reveal'd a flame, that angels might approve.—
Not so her father. A rough unbending soldier,
Train'd to command, exacting blind obedience,
His haughty breast scarce left an avenue
For the mild joys that sweeten social life.
One only claim'd admission: fair Victoria,
His eldest born, the boast, the pride, the solace of his years.
The rugged virtues of his soul relax
Before her melting beauties; and for her,
Olivia, scorn'd at first, must now be offer'd
A piteous victim to monastic vows.

BON. What fiend thus closes up a father's heart,
And steels him 'gainst so soft a suitor. 120

FLO. Ambition. Long has his eagle eye
Fix'd on her airy coping; intent from thence to seize
A ducal crown to grace Victoria's brows.

BON. And so she rise he little recks Olivia's fall.

FLO. 'Tis so.—Long since their kinsman, rich Mon-
toni, dying,

Bequeath'd vast wealth to Carantani's daughters;
On such conditions, that if both attain'd to womanhood,
In equal lot the sum should be divided;
But if either, or sought the church's service, 130
Or died in early bloom, the other then should prove
Sole heiress of this great inheritance.

Caught by the tempting bait, Milan's proud duke,
A sordid soul, ingulph'd in avarice,
Victoria's wealth solicits, not her heart.

She, haughty and self-willed, his suit despises,
And yet would fain his sounding title share. 140

BON. 'Tis rumoured, Celestini has her love?

FLO. And therefore Carantani urges her to wed
With Milan.—For this same Celestini, 140

'Tis a shallow thing, and full of foreign fopperies:
Noisy and hollow as a drum; like the report
Of an unshotted cannon, that cheats the air with its lou-
mockery,

Importing much, and yet conveying nothing.

'Tis Carantani's plague, that to this popinjay

The child he doats on gives her company;

And therefore would he haste to bind Olivia

In vows indissoluble, for till then

Milan, Victoria's nobler suitor, pauses;

Intent the dower of both to gain, or therein failing, 150

Elsewhere to pander for a wealthier maid.

BON. This tale would strike out fire e'en from a heart
of flint.

Were every drop that fills these veins an ocean,
And each poor particle of this aged flesh;
Firmer than he, who with gigantic arm
From wondering Gaza bore her massy gates,
I'd freely part with all, so I might rescue
Gentle Olivia from this foul cabal. 5x

FLO. With all that heart can feel I thank thee. But
more anon.

At midnight Carantani holds a feast 160
In honour of his daughter's 'proaching nuptials.
Our city's nobles thither all repair,
And I, albeit a guest for such a banquet
Unmeet, must go.—'Tis rumour'd that I love
Olivia. Hence Carantani close observes me;
Nor is it fitting to withhold my presence, 6. to be read
So it may serve to dim suspicion's falcon eye.
Ere morning wakes we'll meet again. Farewell;
Be bold, be resolute, and guard this secret.

BON. I'll hold it sacred as my very soul: 170
May this proud thing, that spurns annihilation,
Pine in slow fire, eternal as itself,
If speech unguarded cross the threshold of my lips.

[*Exeunt on different sides.*]

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Prioress's Parlour.

The PRIORESS, EMILIA, ANTONIA, AGATHA, BERTHA,
and other Nuns, appear assembled in debate.

PRIO. It seems, my daughters, that you're all agreed
 To meet this dereliction from our laws
 With wholesome rigour and with sharp corrective.
 Proceed we then, as best becomes our office,
 To enforce the ancient statutes of our house;
 And, without favor or affection, visit
 Such early guilt with early punishment.

EMIL. First let me crave a moment's, nay, but a mo-
 ment's hearing.

Oh, Madam, whilst we sit in judgment
 O'er our sister's faults, be it remembered
 That we ourselves are faulty; and ere long
 Ourselves we must be judg'd. So may we then
 Receive a blessed sentence, as we do now
 Let pity's tear soften the brow of justice.

PRIO. Weak minds are ever prone to shrink from duty.

I own the task is painful. Be it so.

I'm full prepar'd: and doubly am I called on not to falter,

Lest private feeling foil the public right.

ANT. My voice is ever to uphold our statutes;

Nor let misguided calls of ill-placed pity

Do violence to the strict award our house demands.

AGAT. Why halt we 'twixt two paths. Our course is plain;

Would we be merciful we must be just,

Nor shield a culprit from the doom she merits.

EMIL. Are we as gods, that we thus ruthlessly condemn.

Can we discern the secrets of the heart,

Or pluck the mote from out our sister's eye,

Unconscious of the beam that dims our own?

AGAT. You do but waste that time in idle prating,

That should be used to nobler purposes.

PRIO. (*rising.*) Daughters, in dread obedience to our holy church,

The solemn penance I do thus pronounce.

EMIL. (*seizing her robe.*) Ere the irrevocable words are fled,

Writ by recording Angel in the eternal book,

Oh think on Him who is the fount of mercy;

Think who hath said,—“Thou shalt thy neighbour love

“Even as thyself.”—

PRIO. Rise, daughter, nor stay me in my office.

EMIL. (*still kneeling.*) Granted she is in fault; so are we all:

All faulty, all fallen, all undone.

When He, in whose pure sight the very heavens

Are not clean, shall bring to judgment every idle word,

And every thought and motion of the heart,
Oh, how shall we abide the fearful scrutiny,
How hope to meet that mercy we have never shewn.

AGAT. Are you so lost to all we hold most sacred?
Would you profane our cells, uphold a wanton?

BERT. Use not such rude, injurious phrase, good sister.
Look on her face, read but that goodly book,
Where innocence, and purity and peace are stamp'd,
And you shall wish the word a thousand times unsaid. 50

EMIL. With what deep agony of soul, she weeps
The thoughtless error of unguarded youth.
E'en now, as unobserved I passed her cell,
A pitying glance I stole. Humbly she knelt,
And whilst her lips betokened silent prayer,
One hand upon the sacred book was placed,
That open lay before her; whilst the other
Her drooping head supported, that those bright eyes,
Streaming with tears, might view with steady gaze
The blessed Cross, immortal symbol of our promised rest. 60

PRIOR. I charge you, cease; nor give me further hindrance. 70

This be the expiation of our erring daughter's guilt.
Within the spacious vaults beneath our aisles,
Near where the ashes of the dead repose,
In a stone cell, whose iron doors exclude
The light of day, the genial breath of heav'n,
Remote from human eye, debarr'd all converse
With human voice, in the strict abstinence
Of a continual lent, be she detain'd,
Its annual circuit whilst the year performs.
We hope her penitence will be sincere;
So may the day spring, whose unclouded ray
Hath freed our souls from the dark shades of death, 80

Lead her anew to paths of heav'nly joy,
And guide her footsteps to the realms of light.

EMIL. (*aside.*) Alas, my gentle sister, then hast thou
bade the world adieu.

Within this dungeon's horrid gloom immur'd,
Many an unhappy wretch has pined and sunk,
Yet none ere left it, but to gain the shore
Where grief is mute, and sorrow weeps no more.

PRIO. Daughters, you may retire.—Be it my task
To inform Olivia of her chastisement.
Meanwhile I do beseech your prayers may flow,
That this, her light affliction, may obtain
The halcyon hour of pardon and of peace.

[*Exeunt all the Nuns.*]

So far 'tis well. Thus ever should we wield
The iron sceptre of authority;
Respected most when arm'd with brow severe.
Such is my usage. [Controul that's absolute
Makes proud hearts bend, and meaner bosoms fear.]
But for this lovesick girl, a double motive prompts me
To steep her cup with gall. First, Carantani
Shall own himself my debtor; for this extremity
Perchance will urge her instantly to seek
Profession; and her vows once seal'd, his heart's desire,
(The which he hath importun'd me to accomplish),
Shall find relief: and I, the instrument,
Gain vantage to promote our house's honor.
Next shall the Abbot Angelo perceive
[The convent holds a rigorous discipline,
And all must yield submission to our statutes.
That pride of rank, or power, or noble lineage,
Are nothing worth to shelter a defaulter
From the quick lash that waits on humbler culprits.]

Whilst the rude rabble canonize their idol,
Prudence must court opinion's harlot breath,
And stoop before the branch it cannot break. [Exit.

SCENE II.

Victoria's boudoir.

Victoria and the Marchese de Celestini discovered.—A minstrel attends and sings the accompanying air, during which Celestini is employed in fanning Victoria.

What have we to do with fame,
Soon lost, obtain'd with trouble;
Glory's but a sounding name,
And honor's but a bubble.
Crowns Ambition strives to find,
I value not a jot;
Nor the mantling wreaths that bind
The forehead of the sot.

From the niggard grasp of Time
Snatch the moments as they pass;
Pluck the flow'ret in its prime,
Beauty's fading as the grass.
Give me wanton dimpled smile,
Throbbing pulse and roving eye,
Venus, laughing all the while,
Tune my soul to harmony.

VICT. Enough;—Retire.— [The Minstrel retires.

CELES. Marvellous well, my lady;—excellent well, in troth;

A pretty ditty,—a marvellous pretty ditty.]

VICT. 'Tis well enough, methinks, yet nothing marvellous. 20

CELES. Oh, no, not marvellous,—not positively marvellous.

[This saucy, proud superlative, should be
Banish'd the vulgar speech of boors uncouth,
That it might centre where 'twould shine unrivall'd.
'Pon conscience, 'tis an epithet that should be solely
Lady Victoria's attribute :—nay, 'pon my faith—

VICT. Less gloss, my lord, would make more deference.

CELES. Nay, jam me to a mummy, sweet Signora,
If I do lack one grain of deference.

'Tis twin to admiration, ever at her side, 30
And therefore ever in your company.
Were daddy Plato stirring, simple man,
Spite of his musty saws, we'd bait him till he own'd
Philosophy a pudding, vis-à-vis
To smiles that wanton round those dainty lips.

VICT. This idle form of speech offends me. Let it rest.

CELES. For ever, since my lady wills it so.
Tickle me, Proteus, till I'm all congeal'd,
Cold as the frosty Duke, whose leaden eye
Creeps o'er this pink and pattern of perfection, 40
Nor lends a thought to Venus' substitute,
Save as the fair conveyancer of dirty Mammon.

VICT. Name not the wretch : a mildew light upon him.

CELES. Then be it on him solely : not on her,
Who soon shall make him envied thro' the world.

VICT. What choice is left me ! 'Tis my father's pleasure.

CELES. Are you your father's slave ?

VICT. Nor ever will be.

CELES. Can he sing lullaby to naughty ocean,
Or bid the pale fac'd minx, that slily peeps 50

From yonder fleecy cloud, like a green girl,
Go puling back to bed ; can he squeeze out an isicle
From fiery pated Phœbus ; or griping avarice,
From the unmanner'd wretch that woo's you for you
gilding.

VICT. Yet still he is my father ; and his heart doth yearn
Till rival maids salute me Lady Duchess.—

CELES. The title hath a pretty sound ; a sweet lip'd,
goodly title.

Goodly to wear ; goodly to hear ; hath it ought else that's
goodly ?

Can it o'ersway affection, make it relish

The filthy carrion that it holds abhorred ?] 60

Wouldst thou possess the jewel, thou must have
The swine that wears it in his hideous snout.

VICT. (*Smiling.*) Would it were seated on that gracious
front.

CELES. In sooth 'twould be too cumbrous. I envy not
Bold Alexander, seized of half the world,

Since I've a smile from her whose graces rise,

All beauteous as the dawn of infant skies.

With thee, who dost thy sex outshine, [*Drops on his knee.*

Whose charms I do pronounce divine,

How pretty 'twere methinks to keep 70

A tiny flock of b-a-a-ing sheep.

Enter LUDOVICO CARANTANI.

My child, what means this folly ?—Indeed, Sir,

[*To Celes.*

This ill-tim'd mummary affects me not.

CELES. Signior, I kiss your foot. [Your gracious
presence,

I'the very wink of time, bars formal greeting.] 80

For that you wave a ceremonious entrance,
I bid your Excellence a double welcome.

VICT. (*Peevishly.*) What is your pleasure, Sir, if I
may crave it?

CAR. My love, I come the messenger of joyful tidings.
Your noble suitor, but this minute lighted, 80
Thro' me requests an audience. I do beseech you grant it;
Let the full blaze of matchless beauty, dazzle
The eye, that soon shall fondly hail it his.

VICT. (*aside.*) What shall I do? The wretch is my
aversion,
And yet, my Lady Duchess has a pretty sound.
(*Aloud.*) Sir,—as in all things bound, I shall obey you.

[*Exit.*

CELES. Beautiful Signiora, your most devoted slave.

[*Bowing as she exits.*

Illustrious Signior, live a thousand cycles. (*Going.*)

CAR. My Lord, I've something for your private ear.
Would't please you wait a moment? 90

CELES. A million, if your Lordship wills it so.

CAR. Your Lordship knows Rhodolpho, Duke of
Milan?

CELES. Excellent well, Signior; and I do hold him,
A gentleman of very nice distinction,

CAR. Then know him as my daughter's destin'd
husband,

By me approv'd; and when these vapid things,
These summer flies shall cease to flutter round her,
His worth shall make her seek his company.

CELES. (*aside.*) Yes, as mad curs do water. (*Aloud.*)
Signior, upon the mark, 100
I do declare this card of chivalry,
A marvellous delicate and wholesome picture,

For Lady Victoria's eyes to rest upon.

CAR. Then to be brief; you'll pardon me, my Lord,
But when the road is plain, (such is my fashion,)
I make no circuit. Too much of late my daughter
Hath lent herself to your society;
And to say truth, your absence will be welcome.

CELES. (*Aside.*) A cursed churl. (*Aloud.*) Adieu,
most gentle Signior,
I do commend me to your courtesy;
Thro' it, to the fair paragon your daughter;
Thro' her, to my Lord Duke, would't please him to
accept,

From the soft comate of his promised joys,
The salutation of so poor a man.

[*Exit.*

CAR. This fellow's weapon's insignificance.
Such are the toys that female bosoms value,
The chatter such that oft shall discompose
The sober dignities of nobler men.

Would that these 'spousals were accomplish'd!
So shall my thoughts find season of repose.

Within there; my daughter, Victoria, if it please you?

Enter VICTORIA.

Hither, my love. How fragrant is the flower
Whose scented sweets shall fill the wanton air
With new-born odours. Oh, my child, beware
No tainted breath shall rob them of their freshness!

VICT. I know not what your caution would imply, sir?

CAR. 'Tis not what is, 'tis what may chance, Victoria!
Plac'd on the very top of fortune's ladder,
Envied by all, how dangerous is the footing!
A noble suitor gains a noble prize,
A Satellite round princely Jupiter;

Yet, while all eyes are fix'd in admiration,
To shine unblemish'd rests with you alone.

VICT. What should I fear, while honor guides my
steps!

CAR. 'Tis not enough, my child, to steer in honor's
course,

If prudence for a moment quit the helm.

Woman's fair fame is as the spider's air-thread,

Brittle as glass, slight as the filmy gossamer;

'Tis as the virgin and unwritten sheet,

One envious pigmy blot shall soil its whiteness.

As the adventurous peasant, who o'erhangs

Some fearful precipice's giddy height,

The air-pois'd nest to rifle. As the sailor boy,

Who, from the summit of the towering mast,

Smiles at the curling noisy wave beneath;

If some slight tremor shakes his sinewy hold,

He falls, and falls for ever.

VICT. Sir, I beseech you, think of me, as one
With whom no foul disloyal thoughts do harbour.

CAR. Child of my heart, Heaven so preserve thee ever!
But come; the Duke demands our hospitable cares.
Strait I'll conduct him to the marble chamber,
And thither shall my love, a very grace, repair. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

The Marble Chamber in Carantani's Palace.

Enter CARANTANI and the DUKE OF MILAN.

CAR. This shall be reckoned, in our house's annals,
The meetest hour in fortune's calendar.

None doth with kinder welcome greet your grace,
Than the fair object of your honorable suit.
If her looks seem not debtors to her heart,
And wear some shew of maiden bashfulness,
Warring with courteous inclination, note her as one
That lacks not will, but power to give it utterance.

DUKE. I am prepared to meet such obstacles,
As the proud rank and honors that I bear
Oppose to virgin coyness; therefore excuse it needs not.

CAR. Yet Carantani's daughter wants not pride.

DUKE. So much the better. My titles, lineage, fortune,
Shall make her compeer with the proudest she
That Italy produces. Bear that, Sir, in remembrance.

CAR. I grant it is a splendid catalogue. For these,
And more than these, your grace shall hold our homage.
And for my daughter, Sir, I do avouch
Such qualities by nicer art ingrafted
On nature's happiest mould, as do bespeak
A gentlewoman of no mean degree.

DUKE. 'Twere waste of words, Sir, to hold argument,
On that which is unanswerable. Lady Victoria's wit,
Clad in the costly livery of beauty,
Hath been recorded in the scroll of fame,
As a fair mark that bides the test of envy,

CAR. And will not shrink the proof. For she doth
couple,
With such desert as doth o'ertop her fellows,
Discretion that the chariest maid may suit.

DUKE. Nor shall the envied bride of Milan want
Such splendor as may dazzle vulgar eyes,
That yield the palm to outward bravery.
When shall I claim the interchange of vows?

CAR. To-morrow, an please your grace!

DUKE. To-morrow?—

CAR. Illustrious woers should not be the slaves
Of snail-pac'd expectation. Says your grace to-morrow?

DUKE (*musings*.) My Lord, I have a thought come cross
my mind;

Would't please you hear it.—You have a daughter,
A pious maid 'tis rumour'd, that doth incline 40
To yield the perfume of her virgin sweets,
A spotless offering to the sainted altar.

CAR. 'Tis true, her thoughts tend heavenward; and
she chides

The march of time, as though, with envious slowness,
It would retard the record of her vows.

DUKE. What says your Lordship, if to-morrow witness
A double ceremonial: and, whilst the fair Victoria
Receive an earthly corone her gentle sister
Do seek the crown that fades not.

CAR. 'Tis well thought. And, but the church be 50
willing,

The child shall be beholden to your grace,
For speedier entrance on her destin'd calling.
But see, where comes my heart's best treasure.

Enter VICTORIA.

DUKE. (*advancing and taking her hand.*) Madam, accept my duty. (*kisses her hand.*)

How fares your Ladyship?

VICT. Well, (*courtesies*) and your grace's most devoted servant;

Since 'tis my father's will I should be so.

DUKE (*aside.*) Humph!—the man did say she lack'd
not pride.

(*Aloud.*) Madam, I lay those honors at your feet,
The loftiest maiden need not blush to gather.

VICT. And you would have me stoop to take them up. 60
They're worth the having, for my father thinks so.

DUKE. And so I trust do you. (*aside.*) No waste of
compliments.

VICT. That's as it may be, Sir; for, high born maids
Must bend the will to outward circumstance.

A peasant's daughter has a goodlier choice.

CAR. Truce to this pleasantry, I know 'tis but in
jest.

VICT. Nay, Sir, but 'tis in earnest. I am a sorry jester. 70

CAR. (*aside.*) Would't please you bid his grace a
kindlier welcome?

VICT. You are welcome, Sir; nay more, you must
be so;

You must and shall be, for, 'tis my father's will. 70

CAR. And yours. Come, come, this is mere war of
words, Victoria.

VICT. Nay, Sir, but 'tis the very coinage of the brain.

[I cannot, as some practis'd courtiers do,
With cunningly devised, ambiguous meaning,
School my smooth speech to give my thoughts the lie.] 80

CAR. I told your grace she did but banter with us;
And took this merry circuit, to display
The nameless charm sincerity doth wear.

Enter SERVANT.

My Lord, the guests are all assembled, and attend
Your Lordship's presence. 80

CAR. We'll haste to bid them welcome.

I pray you, Sir, receive the gratulations
Our city's nobles are prepar'd to offer : 80

For all do hold in honorable mention
The rumour that hath gain'd of this alliance.
Will you conduct my daughter to the gardens?
Hither, my child, and give the Duke your hand.

VICT. (*withdrawing her hand.*) Ah me, what ails me.

Hath a torpedo touch'd my hand;

Or rather, hath your grace withdrawn its properties 90
From sympathising marble?

DUKE. (*aside.*) You shall find leisure to repent of this.
(*Aloud.*) Is it your pleasure, Madam, to accept my
service?

CAR. Nay, nay, Victoria, this is childish. Come,
your hand.

VICT. Sir, 'tis my pleasure, truly. You hear my
father say so.

Nay more, your choice of either hand, perchance
You'd like to chuse the weightiest.

[*Exeunt the Duke, leading Victoria, in a discontented thoughtful mood.*]

SCENE IV.

Angelo's Cell.

Enter ANGELO and JEROME.

ANG. You have rous'd this spiritless insipid fellow
To make some shew of manly enterprize, and urge
Victoria to elopement. You have prepar'd
All requisites for flight, beyond the reach
Of interruption?

JER. All this is done. A vessel of the swiftest speed
Attends my order. If she lend a willing ear,

To-morrow shall our purpose take effect.

What more ?

ANG. Bid Carantani instant to the convent. 10

JER. It shall be done.

ANG. And by the way, turn all his thoughts
To the detection of Olivia's letter.

He must be put on other scent, till once

Victoria's gone ; therefore let drop mysterious phrase, = *expensive*

As if I hold some strong, some damning proof - x

'Gainst the abettor of this enterprize.

If he do seek to scrutinize thee nicely,

Affect uncertainty ; and say, " 'tis not my humour

To be so questioned." 20

JER. That in the labyrinth of suspence inclos'd, +

His swelling rage may work itself to fury

Against his helpless child ? Is such your meaning ?

ANG. Thou hast the very comment on the text. Look
to't,

Here's thy hire, an' thou prove worthy of it.

[*Pointing to an iron box.*]

JER. I'd rather that the payment do in part

Precede the obligation.

[*Looking at the chest.*]

ANG. What does thy swinish eye take cognizance

Of the polluted instrument of evil, *to be*

Thro' the hard metal that incases it. 30

There, (*unlocks the chest*) stretch forth thy dirty palm
and take thy fill.

Thou tinsel, glittering bauble, thou dost glare,

As 'twere in scorn of the dark end thou servest.

How like a painted Jezabel thou art,

Whose smile lures to destruction.—Go, get you gone,

And have a care this act needs no revisal.

JER. If it lack virtue, hold me for a fool.

[*Exit.*]

(ANGELO solus, looking after him.)

ANG. I hold thee for a villain, an officious villain;
One that has seen too much of the complexion
Of deeds the vulgar must not look upon.
Thou hast ta'en off my vizor: therefore thou art so
dangerous,

That when mine end's accomplish'd, thine must follow
Close on the heels on't. Perform my cherish'd purpose,
And then I do denounce thee to the holy office,
A heretic, past cure, a slave, that bows before
A molten image in the temple's precincts.
Now, Carantani, doth my harvest ripen.

Oh early traitor, rash obdurate fool,
I half forgive thee all the sufferings,
The misery thou hast caus'd me; for thou dost fall
A bird into the net, thyself importunate,
To fill the cloud that hastens to discharge
Its thunders on thy head. How sweet it is,
When the desire's accomplish'd. Let but this craven fop
Release thee of thy idoliz'd Victoria,
And I am satisfied. The rest works to my wish.
Soon shall Olivia, wafted on the wings
Of morning, seek her rest. Then wakes remorse,
And when the worm shall quicken in thy breast
To die no more, vengeance and I are quits.

[Exit. 60 +

SCENE V.

*The gardens of Carantani's palace brilliantly illuminated.
—The moon shines over the distant sea.—A grand com-
pany of noblemen, ladies, &c. &c. are seen walking
through the trees towards the side on which Carantani,
the Duke, &c. are supposed to be approaching.—Two
Noblemen advance up the front of the stage.*

1st. NOBLE. The crowd all passes yonder.

2d. NOBLE. 'Tis to salute the Duke, who moves in
stately guise,

Leading his beauteous mistress.

1st. NOBLE. Her manner savours little of affection.

'Twou'd seem the dukedom hath more respect with
her,

Than he that owns it.

2d. NOBLE. Sir, I surmise as much ; but here comes
one with Florian,

If he be right reported could tell us more distinctly.

Enter to them CELESTINI and FLORIAN DE ROSALBA.

2d. NOBLE. Welcome Rosalba. How fares Lord
Celestini ?

CELES. As one at variance with the ruffian breath
Of this exceeding ugly atmosphere. What, sirrah, ho,
My roquelaure :—do ye dance, to-night, Sir ? This air,
methinks,

Invites to a couranto,

*Enter the DUKE, leading VICTORIA, CARANTANI,
Lords, Ladies, &c. &c.*

CAR. Fair Dian smiles on this good company.
See how, in clear and cloudless majesty,
She sails thro' ambient ether, and with silvery beams
Pierces the dusky coverlet of night.

How she doth shew the power of chastity,
Which when it habits with an artless maid,
Throws every grosser essence into shade.

You are all most welcome, most truly welcome.

CELES. Thanks, courteous Signior, I am exceedingly beholden to you.

CAR. (*aside.*) What, is this caterpillar here again?—
My lord,

Such as our country's hospitable usage claims,
Such welcome take : not Carantani's.

CELES. Even so. I am not one to moot it with you,
Signior.

CAR. Ladies, I pray you all be seated. Let the full
choir,
With dulcet harmony, its hymenean sing.

EPITHALAMIUM.

From thy couch of orient pearl,
From thy amber halls arise ; —
Thy banner, Constancy, unfurl,
Serene as cloudless summer skies.
Thou, whom chaste nymphs delight to sing,
Thy hyacinthine garland bring ;
Nor leave the sacred mystic ring,
Apt emblem of unfading spring.]
Wake, god of love, smile on the fair,
And crown with soft delight this noble pair.

With thee bring a heavenly guest,
Modesty in russet vest,
Gently leading young Desire,
Curbing with decent look his fire ;
Till half alarm'd, perchance she spy
The wandering of his wanton eye,

And smiling, blushing rosy red,
On thy bosom hides her head.
Wake, god of love, protect the fair,
And crown, with rapture crown, this noble pair.

(After the Epithalamium a Dance.)

*Enter JEROME, and approaches CARANTANI, muffled up,
and his cowl drawn down.*

JER. Lord Carantani?

CAR. Who are you? 50

JER. One that has business with you.

CAR. Speak, your errand.

JER. 'Tis my intention. First leave this childish
mummery. 5

CAR. *(advancing to the front of the stage.)* Would
you be private with me?

JER. No, time is precious. You're wanted at the
convent.

CAR. My daughter! This refers to her?

JER. It does.

CAR. Say, what is it? She is not dead, or gone, or—

JER. Not dead, nor gone. She's only thinking of it.

CAR. Explain the mystery. 60

JER. That's what I cannot do. The Abbot Angelo,
mayhap,

Could tell you more about it if he chose.

CAR. I'm on the rack. I'll instant seek him.

JER. Curb your impatience or you'll nothing gain :

Loquacity suits not his humour.

CAR. I go with you o' the instant.—Ladies,
And this sweet company, I do beseech you,
Let my abrupt departure stand excus'd] 57

By the urgency of th' occasion. Meanwhile, my lov'd
Victoria

Shall well supply my poor endeavours to requite

The honour that your presence yields us.

[Exit with Jerome.]

1st. NOBLE. Lord Carantani wears a troubled brow of
late.

2d. NOBLE. It seems as though the public weal, dis-
temper'd

By brawl and faction, did disturb his leisure.

1st. NOBLE. It may be so. And yet, methought the
flash

That shot from forth his eye, spoke cause of agitation

Nearer allied to aught of private wrong. Such is more
keenly felt

Than general calamity.

VICT. Ladies, would't please you thread the mazy
dance?

How fares it with you, Sir?—(to Celestini.) Am I to think
your favour

Keeps equal distance from me with your goodly self.

CELES. Say, rather, your constellation hath attracted
A planet of mortiferous atmosphere, that would eclipse
its splendour.

Nay, nay, my lady, tattling gossips hold

Plutus hath ta'en the ague, and the shivering loon

Would warm himself by little Cupid's fire. I'ts so?

DUKE. (aside.) S'death, would this beetle-headed beau
presume

To puff me with his quaint conceits?—(Aloud.)—Sir, I
have heard

That foppery and imbecility are of one mother born;

Perhaps you could inform me?

CELES. Faith, my Lord Duke, you've posed me.
I do labour with exceeding poverty of wit, of purse as't
may be.

Nor do I envy rich ones; for I've heard 'em say in
Padua,

That avarice was the sworn bridesman of contempt,
And where one fixed, needs must the other dwell.

DUKE. (*aside.*) The interpretation needs no glossary
To palliate its venom. (*Aloud.*) Harkee, sir.
(*Speaking in a whisper.*) Your lordship wears a sword.

CELES. (*aside.*) A sword!—What does he mean?—

(*Drawing near VICT.*) Yes, my Lord Duke,
A weapon of exceeding cunning workmanship;
A very well bred sword; the hilt of amber,
And the blade the brightest in all Christendom.

DUKE. (*Still speaking low.*) Are ye disposed to take
the morning air
Tomorrow, on the course?

CELES. Course!—morning air!—Indeed, most noble
Duke,

I'm not familiar with the morning air. I do esteem it
Vastly uncivil to digestion, and impregnate
With vapours of most unhandsome property!

DUKE. (*aloud.*) Harkee, sir; I hold our country fa-
shion ill accords

With true-born valour, with pride that should disdain
The base assassin. I would have given ye credit
For something of a man; one that would justify
This petulance of spirit. But since I find ye, as you are,
Devoid of shame, a thing beneath my anger,
Take heed you crawl not from your shell again
To spit your nauseous gallimaufry, or my page
Shall flog ye back with nettles.

VICT. What, sir, are you my father's Castellain,
To hector thus a gentleman of note?
My sex is but a sorry second to my will,
Else should you feel the strength of my resentment,
In abler proof than show of empty words.

CELES. Your pardon, madam? Sir, if [the prurience
of too loose a fancy,
Hath grated roughly on your honorable ear,
I ask your eminence's frank forgiveness.

FLO. (*aside.*) Farewell, brave ancestry; and pride of
birth, farewell.

Hath the meridian sun of glory blaz'd so bright,
Only to set upon a dunghill brood?
Gods! Is this womanish fellow all that's left
Of princely Celestini? If it were possible,
That the illustrious dead could be again possess'd
Of any corporal attribute, how many gallant hearts
Would burst indignant forth; how many hands,
Impatient stretch to seize the coronet,
Gain'd by their deeds, ennobled by their blood.

VICT. Ladies, you seem to wait the welcome dance.
Let music sound, and with its concord put to flight
The savage jars that strive to discompose our mirth.

CELES. (*offering VICT. his arm.*) Sweet lady, ever
your most obsequious slave.

VICT. My lord, excuse me. I will release you of the
office;
For Carantani's daughter needs not your protection.

[*Exeunt, leading the company, music sounds.*]

ACT III.

SCENE 1.

Olivia's Cell.

OLIVIA *sola.*

OLIV. Thou, whose enchantments form my joy, my
torment,

Whose mirror gives the ideal form a substance,

[How thou dost minute in thy chronicle

Each trivial word,] each look, each motion; and dost
make

Of that which least important seems to common eyes,

A volume, more delightful to peruse,

Than all the precious lore of all the world.

Ye, who have truly tasted, ye alone can feel,

How [love, cameleon-like, doth browse on airy nothing.]

How hope doth throw her specious causeway over

The gulf that reason would not look upon;

Building, on that which is impossible,

A structure of more solid seeming, than the arch,

That looks with triumph on the wave beneath.

Thou false physician! how thou dost abuse,

With treacherous phantoms, the distemper'd heart;

Like rapturous dreams by opiate produc'd,
 That, with acuter anguish wake the feverish soul
 To sad reality.—What a poor wretch am I !
 To be thus sugar'd o'er with blissful visions,
 But to drink deeper of the gall of fate.
 But stay, what well known form arrests my straining eye ?
 Is it indeed my sister ?—my Victoria ?

[*Going to meet Victoria.*]

VICT. Yes, sister, 'tis herself, and on our father's
 summons.

OLIV. My sister's duty has outstripped reflection,
 Else should she not have seemed to jest with sorrow.
 Those gorgeous robes will suit my sad abode.

VICT. Sister, be sure they were not so design'd.
 Last night our father held a grand assembly,
 In honor of the Duke of Milan ; and, ere I left the dance,
 His message, which on the instant I obeyed,
 Desired me here. So, sister, do not think
 This habit was put on for these dull walls to stare at.

OLIV. Victoria, do not chide me thus. Sister, by name,
 Why am I not the sister of your heart ?

VICT. And who prevents it ? Is it not yourself,
 Your own perverseness, and your obstinate
 Rejection of our father's first desire ?

OLIV. Alas, to what would that desire tend ;
 To doom his offspring to an early grave.

VICT. Sure, 'tis some wild disorder of the brain,
 That thus has conjured up unreal fancies ;
 (To make of all that is most beautiful to thought,
 A fearful apparition.) Sister, I did not look to hear such
 speech

From one that is so piously reported.

OLIV. Sister, if I approach'd the hallow'd altar with

A mind so ill dispos'd to aid the sacrifice,
Then should my heart turn recreant to my lips,
Branding me base apostate.

VICT. Rash girl, our father is not us'd to brook defiance.

OLIV. Nor I to wear it, save when compliance with
his ends.

Do couple loss that's dearer than my life.

VICT. Do you renounce your heav'nly calling, sister?

OLIV. I do renounce usurp'd authority,
That would enforce my will.

VICT. And will not ratify your vestal covenant?

OLIV. Never!

VICT. Then be your folly on your head. I have done.

[Going.

OLIV. And is it thus Victoria spurns her sister?

Support me, Nature, for the conflict's thine!

How can those chords, that scarce do bear the touch,

Endure to be so rudely torn asunder?

VICT. [This is mere idle rhapsody.] What would ye
with me?

OLIV. I would recal affection to its seat;
That sympathy, with kindling ardor fraught,
Might to a sister ope a sister's heart.

VICT. Be brief then, for I reckon not copious flights.
The shortest tale seems long to an unwilling ear.

OLIV. Have I no advocate in that once gentle bosom;
No silent pleader, that can whisper thee,
Olivia would not have Victoria sorrow thus,
And yet would have her, could it prove her love?

VICT. Most kind and generous sister! Is it even so!
[I needs must have the vapours, or some puling qualms,
Some whining girlish squeams, to taste thy baby comfort!]

OLIV. And is it thus, thou base degenerate world,

Thus that thy pomps and vanities do steel
 The rebel bosom against nature's voice?
 Can this be she, whose little limbs so oft
 Have folded mine in love; whose little eyes, 80
 Streaming with tears, conveyed the soft infection,
 That made me partner in her infant griefs; whose little
 lips,
 Printing on mine a hundred balmy kisses,
 Would seem to scorn the fleshy veil that hindered
 The naked intercourse 'twixt heart and heart?

VICT. Such choice chimeras suit a sober nun.
 Yet I could wish their unsubstantial drapery
 Did wear the furbelow of common sense;
 For I am one who lack a microscope,
 To view the coat of crazed hyperbole. 90

OLIV. You are my sister, still!—may heav'n forgive,
 Freely as I do, these unkindly words.

VICT. Who needs forgiveness that has done no wrong?
 I'm ill disposed to trifle thus; so, sister, in a word,
 Is it your purpose to deny our father
 The end that has your happiness in view?

OLIV. Sister, [I do abjure all violence.
 My own free will must guide my choice;]
 Conviction ratify that choice; and till it does,
 No power on earth shall force me to profession. 100

Enter CARANTANI, enraged.

CAR. Then may the powers, that wield the bolts of
 heaven,
 Let fall their vengeance on thy guilty head. 110

OLIV. Sir! my father!

CAR. Name me not so, thou disobedient child.

OLIV. (*dropping on her knees.*) How have I merited
 your anger, sir?

CAR. Rise, cockatrice ! nor mock, with vile effrontery,
The duteous attitude that would bespeak a blessing.

OLIV. My honored father, do not kill your child
With ecstasy of passion. [Let but this storm go past,
Like morning mists before the orient sun,] 110
And your poor child again shall share your love.

CAR. Out on the word !—'Tis foreign to your bosom !

OLIV. My father has no intuition to descry
What passes in that bosom ; else, should he not
Estrange himself from his unhappy daughter.

CAR. His daughter, sayst thou ! no, 'tis an adder that
would glide
Within his breast, to plant its sting more deeply.
Out upon't. Thou art no more my daughter.

OLIV. You will not, cannot, must not so disown me.
Have I in ought before oppos'd you ? Nay, e'en now, 120
Could I but shape my conscience to your will,
You should lack cause, Sir, to upbraid me thus.

CAR. Who talks of conscience, that turns rebel to her
duty ?

OLIV. Thou hapless child, what power can match un-
kindness.

It's edge is sharper than the whetted knife ;
And, like the toothed saw, it harshly cuts asunder
The tendrils of the heart.

VICT. Sister, 'tis strange you mix such shew of love
With acts that are thus ill akin to duty.

OLIV. [Ambition, restless, ruthless, ever craving fiend,] 130
Hast thou raz'd out affection ! I am no more your friend,
No more your playmate, schoolfellow, your sister ;
But, as a useless weed, that does encumber
The vaunted bed, that pride hath gaily garnished,
You'd cast me forth, a base and barren shoot,

That would intrude 'twixt you and your distinctions.

CAR. Tell me, presumptuous, thankless, worthless child, Grate
 Do you dare me, with this flippant oratory,
 To enforce my will by sterner argument? 0-13

OLIV. I would, in all things, be indeed your daughter. 140

VICT. But in obedience. Is it not so, sister?

OLIV. Victoria, sister, do not so wantonly
 Add to the fury of our father's wrath.

VICT. Ungracious sister, 'tis yourself that cause
 This ferment in his blood. Would you endeavour
 To make me joint partaker in the offence?

CAR. Spoke like my child. Thou art my very child,
 Whose duty seems to strive to outpace my love.
 (To Oliv.) But for your mulish, stubborn nature, chains,
 Scourges, and lonely dungeons are most meet. 150

OLIV. Oh, sir, if coarsest raiment, homeliest food;
 If solitude unblest'd, unhallow'd, could approve
 The duty that I bear, the love that I would owe you,
 Never would holy martyr to the stake approach,
 With half so willing, half so glad a spirit.

CAR. Fool! fool! have stakes and martyrs ought to do
 With the sweet peace that sheds its balm upon
 The saint-like virgin votarists of these pure abodes?

OLIV. Oh, there's the gall that frets me to the quick.
 Can I, whose heart's subdued by earthly passion, 160
 Profess a heav'nly? Can I renounce the world,
 While one that's dearer, oh dearer far than life,
 In birth my equal, in mind how far beyond me,
 In fortune rich, but passing rich in love,
 While he shall, as the moments pass, recal each wan-
 dering thought
 To his beloved image? Oh, Sir, I cannot do it.
 I cannot make the sacredest of vows

False as Sapphira's oath.

CAR. Then may the curse that on Sapphira lit,—

OLIV. Sir, (*kneeling and seizing his robe.*) Sir, what 170
does my father mean,

That thus, [in speechless agony, he bites his lips] so
fiercely,

His cheek of ashy paleness, while his eyes

From their swoln orbits flash indignant fire ?

CAR. Hear me, thou,—hear,—thou,—what shall I
name thee ;

Most harden'd,—most obdurate,—most unnatural !

VICT. Dear Sir, let not your noble nature be so strange-
ly moved :

My sister does but sport with your distemper.

CAR. Does she, by Lucifer : then, (*drawing his dagger*)
justice take thy due.

(*Pauses.*) No, no, it must not be. (*Returns the dagger.*)

OLIV. (*Raising her hands.*) Sweet Heaven, forgive 180
him ! He knows not what he does.

If I must die, receive me to thy bliss :

But oh, be not my blood upon my father's head.

For all the "glories of immortal life, I would not

That he should heap perdition on his soul.

CAR. (*withdrawing himself.*) Come, my dear daughter,
lets away. For you,

Here whine and perish, maniac as you are.

You are no flesh of mine, and from this hour

I leave you to your fate. I'll to the Prioress.

You know the worst. (*To Vict.*) Come, tarry not.

What, does some womanish scruple linger yet,
And draw the briny drops from those bright eyes ?

Spite of the leagued hosts that people hell,

The coronet shall sparkle on that brow,

And envious rivals hail thee Lady Duchess.

[*He pulls her away, she hiding her face in her veil.*]

OLIV. (*solus.*) Sure some bright angel, from the realms
of light,

Hath touched the chords of pity; and the heart,

That once did glow with gentler qualities,

Strives, like a bird unwillingly pent up,

To flee Ambition's cage. But lo, the freshness of the 200
morning air

Invokes to grateful homage. Dear sister,

In my orisons be our past loves remembered.—

[*Scene closes.*]

SCENE II.

The Gates of the Monastery.

FLORIAN and BONARIO enter as *Palmers*.

FLO. Our sober habits will secure admittance.

These holy men are wont to greet the pilgrim

With pious welcome and with courteous rites.

Our errand must be hasty, for I judge

That Carantani would move heaven and earth

To force these hated vows on sweet Olivia.

They are the harbingers of proud Victoria's greatness;

And he recks not Olivia's misery,

Nor e'en her life, so through the shores of Italy

His darling daughter be proclaim'd a duchess.

Some weighty matter call'd him from the feast;

So be our motto, "speed and secrecy."

BON. First must the gardens carefully be searched.

Near to the aged sycamore (with store of gold I gain'd it)

A passage, to the hoary seniors only known;
Leads to the cells beneath the convent chapel,
Where guilty sisters used to be confined.

FLO. This suffering maid would sooner part with life
Than seal a contract fatal to her peace.
So here, amidst the silent dead perchance immured,
Would Sharon's fairest rose be left to wither.
Curst be the thought, but still more curst be he
That could have heart to shape it into action.

BON. Grant we gain access to her, what follows?

FLO. She must consent to flight. 'Tis flight alone can
save her.

BON. Think on the terrors that the holy office holds
O'er those that quit their sacred calling.

FLO. I think on nothing, but on her who is
My life, my soul, my joy, my heaven, my all.

BON. Peace!—Now to the gate. Let me be spokesman,
Least your impatient ardor wake suspicion.

[Knocks at the gate.

JEROME opening the gate.

JER. Who are ye?—what's your business?—be brief.

BON. Pilgrims, who from the holy land e'en now
return'd,

Do crave the rights of hospitality.

JER. I'll to the abbott with your message. Rest here
the while. [Exit.

FLO. Nature has written in this fellow's lineaments
The colour of his mind. [Mark, his averted eye
Shrinks from the honest gaze that meets it,
As tho' 'twere fearful some unseemly deed
Should at this window of the soul appear
In judgment 'gainst him. He's apt for any mischief.

'Twas he that summon'd Carantani; and my heart mis-
gives me
But some foul deed's a brooding.—Soft, here's the abbott'

Enter ANGELO.

ANG. My sons, the freshest blessing that the morn
Bears on her dewy wings, be yours.—Say your occasion?

BON. The favoring gales, that sped us o'er the wave,
Be doubly welcome; our light bark, at anchor
Behind yon beetling cliff, demands our thanks,
That hath, as 'twere, outstripp'd the winds to gain us
The benediction of a holy man. All Palestine records
The fame of Angelo; and pious palmers hold,
The pilgrimage, that closes with his benison,
Is doubly blest.

ANG. (*aside.*) I must not seem to court this grateful
unction.

(*Aloud*) We deem it happy that those staffs have borne
Your wandering steps to San Martino's walls.
In then, my sons, and rest awile. Refresh ye
With such coarse fare as we can set before ye.

BON. Thanks, holy father, we do accept your kindness;
And such poor payment as our prayers can offer,
The brotherhood shall be our debtors for.

[*Exeunt into the house.*]

ANG. Go to, thou fool:—wouldst feed on flattery,
When every nerve should be string'd up to vengeance.
Bestir thee, and thou hast the victim in thy clutch.
So, cruel father, thou wouldst immure thy child
Within those gloomy towers; but, an' I judge aright,
Space shall not long confine the enfranchis'd spirit.
No, she shall voyage to an unknown shore,

Herself the pilot ; — this (*taking out a vial*) the instrument.

How intercourse doth pall the shame of guilt.

First, like the child that scarcely dare approach

The peaceful ocean, we shrink back affrighted ;

Then venture by degrees, as the unskilful swimmer,

Gaining by little and by little confidence with use,

Till, at the last, we fearless plunge into

The billowy surge that angrily o'erwhelms us.

'Tis solitude, the nurse of every baser passion,

That fosters crime ; and in the cells, where virtue should
preside,

A hydra-headed monster rears his forky front,

Turning the promis'd good to direst evil.

[Oh woman, lovely woman, how can peace be found

Where thou art banish'd.] Thou art the chosen instrument,

By all-surpassing excellence ordain'd

To be our choicest blessing. Hence, fancy couples,

With all most good, thy softer attributes ; hence, virtue
bears thy form ;

And, but we're told within the folds of heav'n,

Sex shall no more preserve its nice distinction,

To mingle ought of earth with love that's perfect,

Thought would the glorious habitants in thy sweet livery
clothe,

So much do men adore it. Thou pattern-work of nature,

'Twere better far mid' savage wilds to roam,

Void of all fellowship with ought created,

Than mingle in the social haunts of men

Despised by thee.

Sure, Angelo, thy heart was made for better things

Than to rebel 'gainst heav'n, the comate of despair ;

Despair and black revenge, that, like the yawning grave,

Ope's its ungorged throat to swallow innocence.

Yet stay—Who forc'd thee to a cloister? A cursed traitor.

Ah, curs'd I say, for ever cursed by thee. 100

Enough. This is the stone that points the sharpen'd axe,
The fury this that marshalls me to hell.

[Exit into the convent.]

SCENE III.

The Marble Chamber in CARANTANI'S Palace.

CARANTANI and the DUKE discovered sitting.

DUKE. And, to say truth, it bears an ugly aspect. that appear

CAR. 'Tis but my daughter's humour. Your grace
shall find it so.

Custom hath rais'd a bar 'gainst virgin love,
That, be it e'er so true, must wear the shew of coyness. to show

DUKE. My lord, my lord, you do deceive yourself.

Love yields to no compulsion; is not bought;
And will not bow itself to outward circumstance.

Lady Victoria loves. She has given up the citadel,
And let the happy he that's won it, wear it.

CAR. No, I will not think upon't. 'Twere kinder far,
With barbed shaft to pierce me thro' the vitals,
Than let this monstrous supposition light upon
The organ of the mind. 10

DUKE. Lord Carantani understand me right.

[Love is distilled from friendship's purest essence:

'Tis a spontaneous offering, and springs forth uncall'd
for. Love

Lawful investiture of fair Victoria's person,

Can ne'er possess me of her heart's affections.

Nay, sir, I must speak out : another holds them.

CAR. Most noble Duke, this fancy has no substance. 20

Trust me, 'tis not allied to staid reality.

And for this naught, this blot of heraldry,

My daughter's pride, that soars high as her birth,

Holds no affianced with so poor a thing.

DUKE. Who are so blind as they that will not see.

Lord Celestini, (do not frown my lord,)

Lord Celestini has the first fruits of her love,

And I'll be no man's secondary.

CAR. (*aside angrily.*) Curs'd reptile, how I long to crush thee !

(*Affecting composure.*) How shall a few plain sober words unravel 30

The glossy web that jealousy hath spun.

Ancient alliance, still more strongly knitted

By interchange of friendship, had linked in closest union

The house of Celestini and my own. Hence, our children

Drew with their earliest breath the dew of fellowship ;

And habits, that had long embalm'd his ancestry,

With tears of sweet remembrance, made e'en this butterfly 40

A welcome visitor. A visitor, no more.

A toy, a shallow witless trifle, that girlish coquetry

Was pleas'd to angle with. 40

DUKE. My lord, this gracious explanation honours me.

I grant it all that's good ;—and yet, methinks,

Another, and a weightier cause prohibits

These spousals. Will it please you hear me.

CAR. (*aside.*) On my life, this coolness has respect to

Olivia's rumour'd change. Oh viper,—viper, here's thy sting.

(*Aloud.*) Your grace shall find a patient auditor.

I pray you tell it. (*Aside.*) S'death, is there any pang Acuter than a child's rebellion,—none, none.

(*Aloud.*) I do beseech your grace inform me in the matter. 50

DUKE. Your lordship knows my fortunes are extensive; But,—

CAR. But what sir,—speak;—pray tell me, I'm all attention.

(*Aside.*) Daft mule, thy stubbornness will be thy father's curse.

DUKE. I grant that marriage is an honorable state.

CAR. True,—honorable,—yes. (*Aside.*) I see his drift.

DUKE. But heavily surcharg'd. Oh, mines of gold Would scarce suffice our high bred ladies' tastes. Such stores of precious jems, such royal retinue, Such sumptuous raiment,—such— 60

CAR. Your grace must weigh against these customary charges,

My daughter's splendid fortune. (*Aside.*) Thou undutiful Vile rebel, I hate thee from my soul. (*Aloud.*) Her splendid fortune.

DUKE. Lord Carantani, I will be plain with you. 'Tis credibly reported, that your younger daughter,

In whom, an' she decline profession, The half of this inheritance will vest, Doth utterly reject monastic obligation.

Nay more, that she hath bound herself by firmest promise

To young Rosalba. 70

CAR. (*starting from his chair.*) May every drowsy imp
of hell awake,
To mad the brain; may fires consume the tongue,
That first proclaim'd this falsehood to the world.
Lightening, blast, plague, or if there's ought more
deadly,
Have ye no power to raze a miscreant child
Clean out from nature's book. S'death. Plighted to
Rosalba—
She dare not—would not—could not.

DUKE (*rising.*) [I pray ye, sir, be calm; nor let these
bursts of passion
Fright sober judgment from her chrystal seat.]

CAR. What villainy!—thou robber, thou marauder,
Thou dog, Rosalba, let me but seize thee,
And I'll send thee howling to perdition.

Have at thee—nay, flinch not,—answer,—most abhorred.

DUKE. Sir, recollect yourself; what does all this
avail?

CAR. And for thee, stubborn child!—What do I call
thee!

Child,—no.—Thou art no child of mine,—for thee,
Monstrous,—unnatural,—unsex'd—unhousel'd,—
[I'd rather see thee stretch'd a clay-cold corpse,
Than wantoning in bridal finery.]

DUKE. My lord, I wait till your fierce anger's past.
Please you compose this tumult.—Be yourself.—Be
calm.—

CAR. Calm, say ye; calm, sir; oh. (*Aside.*) Married
with Rosalba.

(*Aloud.*) Yes,—yes.—What would your grace.—I'm
calm.

DUKE. Then 'tis such calm as stormy ocean wears

When most he rages; as *Ætna* bellowing all his fires
forth;

Or the gaunt tiger, when he fiercely springs
Upon the prostrate lamb.

CAR. (*While the Duke is speaking, he walks about in violent emotion, then stops, and accosts him.*

Is there a traitor priest; a very wretch, a Balam,
Would for base lucre league them? Oh! just heaven,
If any such there be, may palsy bind his tongue, 100
And writhing spasms shake his quivering lips, ex
Till agony is glutted. Hardened,—unequalled,—per-
jured.—

My lord, my lord, think you the villain lives
That,—oh.—I'm faint.—O—live—par—ri—cide!

(*Falls back in his chair.*

(*More composed.*) Pray you draw near, sir. Said your
grace, my daughter

Was wedded to Rosalba?

DUKE. Indeed, my lord, I did not.

CAR. (*starting up.*) Then may earth ope, and living
swallow them,

Or 'ere such rites accomplish'd.

DUKE. Sir, I intreat you keep this choler down, 110
And all may yet be well.

CAR. Yes, duke; all will, all must be well. They
are not wedded,

Nor ever shall be. Once more I am myself;
And, 'ere yon glorious orb again hath left his couch
To light the world, Victoria shall Lady Duchess be,
And all her fortune yours.

DUKE. On such condition I joyfully subscribe.
The fair Victoria shall seem fairer still,
Bringing so rich a dow'r.

CAR. (*ringing the Duke's hand.*) Nay then 'tis done. 120

I'll to the convent, and this night

Olivia takes her vows. Trust me, your grace,
This night,—this very night,—good duke, she's yours.

DUKE. Sir, might it please you, rein your temper
firm,

And [*clothe your speech in soft persuasion's garb.*]

It subtly wins upon a generous nature,

And steals the palm from open violence.

CAR. Your grace's caution is not ill bestowed :

I'll heed it. Fare you well.

DUKE. Farewell, and prosper, sir. 130

[CARANTANI *exit*.]

DUKE (*solus.*) [*This scowling monk did school me
rightly then.*] 140

Olivia loves Rosalba ; and Carantani knew it.

Ah, knew it. Yet, in despite of forc'd conviction,

Would screen it even from himself. Else, why

These bursts of passion ? And shall I stand absolv'd,

That wittingly conspire against an injur'd maid,

And rob her of her dow'r, her peace, perchance her life.

Tush,—tush.—To do, or not to do, lies yet within my
power.

To do were gainful,—not to do, nobler far.—

Come, let's compare them. First, not to do, would win
me 140

Some store of fame, as generous, upright, honest, just ;

All honorable names, yet more for show than substance.

But then to do. To marry one reputed

The richest heiress in all Italy.

And, sha'nt these nuptials furnish ready pretext,

For impost levied on my rich domain.

Sha'n't her vast portion draw each peasant's tribute,

Till my swol'n treasury's surfeited with pelf.

[Fame, thou art goodly. Gold, thou art goodlier still ;] 150
A solid pile, against a painted shadow.

[I grant ye she's a froward, sour, peevish shrew ;] 5

That vanity sits on her haughty brow ;

That spite lurks in her eye, and malice feeds her smile.

She has beauty ! true : but mixed with such acerbity, = *stinging*
The rose is little worth the thorns that case it.

Admit she's handsome ! Is she honest too ?

And, in the matter of this Celestini,—

VICTORIA *bursts from behind the canopy.*

VICT. As innocent, as thou art poor and worthless.

DUKE. (*aside.*) Confusion ! has she heard all ?

VICT. Nay, do not start, and look thus earnestly, 160
As you'd recal the words that air has swallowed.

[I know ye for a wretch ; an abject, paltry wretch ;] 5

That for the lure her ample fortunes offer,

Would wed with one that scorns you.

DUKE (*aside.*) [Cool irony shall match this wordy 5
humour best.]

(*Aloud.*) Lady, I'm much beholden to epithets that flow
So glibly o'er the tongue. You make mine ears your
debtors

For a full peal of love.

VICT. Love ! love for thee ! Say rather loathing, hate,
Disdain, contempt, abhorrence, detestation. 170

[What name is base or vile enough to fit thee ?] 5

DUKE. Oh ! would I were a mirror, that I might
reflect

Lady Victoria's charms, a hundredfold more charming,
When gently fanned by passion. Thou mild and simple
maid,

Pity a swain whose crime it is to love thee.

VICT. Brute ! wouldst thou fleer me with this insolence ?

[Love never pierc'd the ice that chills a heart,
Cold as the summit of our native Alps.]

DUKE. Nor plain, unvarnish'd sense, the motley vapours,

That pride hath fostered in that pretty brain.

VICT. Say, is the fellow madman, or a fool ?

DUKE. Neither, sweet lady ; but an unskill'd empirick,
That from the limpid font of beauty would essay
To drain some bitter humours.

VICT. Oh for a basilisk's eye, to make thee rue thy folly.

Those prominent and rolling balls would seem to measure me,

As they'd demand, " what is your weight in ducats ?"
Monster ! out of my sight.

DUKE. Nay, that were cruel. 'Tis my ambition, lady,
So it might please you, to be your other self.

VICT. But 'tis not mine. Go, seek a golden calf:
That were a fitter helpmate for a soul like thine.

DUKE. Patience, dear lady, while I press my suit,
With such conceit as my poor wits can offer !

VICT. Brief speech is best, where suitors are most hateful.

Aid me, insulted love, to stifle angry railings,
And deck my measur'd words with thoughtful dignity.
'Tis true, my father long had mark'd me your's ;
Wooing my ignorance with such false view of greatness,
That (I take shame to own it) for your swelling title
I might have sacrificed an injured sister's rights.
Before we met, I heard how avarice

Had seal'd up all your nobler qualities :
And so had prejudice forestall'd affection's seat.
Chance gave me audience to your secret thoughts to-night ;
And, since I find you as you are, I would not,
For twice ten thousand dukedoms, be your bride.

DUKE. I thank ye, madam. You leave no doubtful
meaning.

VICT. Nor do I wish it. Were ye sole monarch of
the globe,

I would not share your throne ; and so farewell, for ever. 210

[Exit.

DUKE. Were it yourself alone, I'd freely say amen.
But you're a prize too glorious to be lost
By childish petulance.] Hating, or doating, still you
shall be mine.

[Exit.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

The Garden of the Monastery.

FLORIAN and BONARIO are discovered searching the ground carefully with their staffs. The sycamore tree on one side of the stage; on the other a shady avenue.

FLO. Bonario, this is strange ! There's not a particle of earth,
Small as a minim's eye, surrounds this sycamore,
But wev'e examined nicely. We are deceiv'd :
There's no such passage here.

BON. Do not so hastily abandon further search,
Patience, dear lord.

FLO. Who talks of patience, when [each minute seems
More precious than an age. Olivia ne'er absents herself
From holy matins. There's some disaster hap'd.
She is betray'd, undone, destroyed. Ye gloomy battle-
ments,

Whose huge proportions seem to scowl defiance
'Gainst all intrusion; oh, for the fiery bolts of angry
heav'n

To buffet ye, till not a stone was on another standing.

Distraction ! What shall I do, Bonario ? Say any thing,
so it may save her. 2 save

BON. Do not thus bay the air. Once more let's
search each nook y

And pigmy crevice, till we find the door. It must be here. o x

ANGELO and JEROME appear in the shady avenue, unseen
by FLORIAN and BONARIO.

ANG. Soft :— See ye these men ! [Those frantic gestures
ill accord o x

With the solemnity that suits a palmer's mien.

JER. 'Tis odds they are impostors. The world is full
of them.

ANG. Hist !

[He and JEROME conceal themselves.

BON. Hark ! Methought I heard a footstep sound 20
from yonder avenue.

FLO. Where ? what valiant spirit dare molest us ?

[He darts across the stage and surveys the avenue.

Pshaw ! 'tis but the noon-tide air that stirs the rustling
leaves.

BON. Pray, lord, be more composed. Resume our
search again.

FLO. Again to be defeated. And [art thou,] sweet
Olivia,

[In some lone dungeon's horrid damps immur'd,] o

While I breathe the untainted air that's fresh from heaven !

What profit is that fretted canopy to me,

While [thou'rt by clanking chains and horrid bolts detain'd,] o o

Where I shall gaze upon thy angel face no more ? = angel

Out on it ! Madness is in the thought. 30 x

BON. A little, yet a little patience, and we may find
the entrance.

ANG. There should be more than customary cause,
To make its agents strive so earnestly.
See ye the elder palmer; how he prys around yon tree,
The while the younger, giving some hidden passion vent,
Like [a bewildered maniac, with the unreal shadow
Wages empty war.]

JER. Methinks his wits are stolen; the which this
hoary dotard
From mother earth would re-demand anew.

ANG. Peace on this raillery. There is some mystery
here,
Which we must master.

FLO. Thou poor suffering prisoner, shall thy captivity
Know no release? Forbid it, righteous powers,
That one so excellent in all her qualities,
Should by un pitying bigotry be rudely snatch'd away!

BON. Lord Florian, [rouse yourself. These fears are
idle.]

FLO. Oh! would they were. I know her gaolers well.
Idle, say'st thou? [The brinded tiger, or the hungry
wolf,
Would shew more mercy.] No; San Martino's fame is
not belied.

To err is death. Thou art lost, Olivia; lost, for ever!

BON. You should do better, with such sad fore-
bodings,
To strain each slender thread that's in the woof of fate,
So it might chance to save her. Come, stir yourself.
(Strikes against something.) Ha! what's this? [Stoops.
Sure 'tis the place we search for.]

FLO. (running to him.) What, say, have you found it?
That shake o' the head—

BON. Alas! 'tis but a stone, whose inky cloak
deceived me.

FLO. Even so. [*Goes back and leans against the tree.*
So the poor criminal hath dreamt of pardon, 60
Then waking, hears his heavy-sounding knell.
Do fierce hyenas fondly rear their young, while thou,
Remorseless Carantani, hast seared thy callous heart
Against the voice of nature. There is more yielding in
this granite.

[*He strikes it vehemently with his staff.*

Ha! what hollow sound reverberates beneath.

(*Strikes again.*) On my life, the very door. Nay, here's
the ring,

Conceal'd within this spreading root.

Sweet heaven! I thank thee. Bonario, lift, lift!

[*Attempts to lift it.*

BON. Hold for amoment.

FLO. Not for the wealth of worlds. 70

BON. I would but cast a look, lest any curious eye
Might chance to gain our secret.

FLO. These cares are needless. Already is a moun- 80
tain's weight removed.

Come, let me haste to explore this friendly passage.

[*They lift up the trap-door.*

Do you watch here while I descend.

BON. You're too impetuous. Yon royal luminary 90
Sheds not a solitary beam to cheer these dreary vaults.
A moment, and a courteous guide shall lend its aid,
To pilot you through the still halls of gloom
And silence.

[*He strikes a light and gives it.* 80

JER. An' I guess right, he'll lack a host to bid him
greeting.

ANG. Where does he go?

JER. Where there are eyes that will not heed his
candle.

ANG. Tell me, where does this lead?

JER. Towards a strange land, where those that habit
tell no tales.

ANG. The cemetery?

JER. So.

FLO. (*Enters.*) Now close down the door. 'Tis not so
heavy but

From underneath I'll lift it. You'll wait my coming!

BON. Breathing a fervent prayer, that the all-seeing
eye,

That pierces to earth's centre, may guide and prosper you.

[*Closes the door down and sits down.*]

JER. 'Tis time I should be on my errand.

ANG. Beware it fail not.

JER. Do you doubt me? Fools only pause on means.

If fair ones fail—

[*Drawing half out a dagger concealed in his robes.*]

—Here's others will be surer.

ANG. These men must be observ'd. Meantime, with
caution

I'll parley with this palmer.

[*He advances.*]

What ho! my son, my son, awake. [*Bonario feigns sleep.*]

BON. (*rising.*) Midst these sweet bowers, that bloom
with more than mortal beauty,

Peace spreads her halcyon wings, and charms the
wearied senses

To forgetfulness. Sure, holy father,

Blest spirits, that enjoy eternal amnesty

From every earthly passion, dwell in such shades as these.

ANG. And yet, as late I paced these walks, methought
My eyes, slowly withdrawn from holier contemplations,

Did light upon a form so wildly turbulent,
 That peace should seem a stranger to his breast.
 Nay, do not look so pale. Where is our youthful pilgrim?
 'Twas he I mean. 110

BON. Father, e'en now, to seek a more secure
 retreat
 From the fervid glare of noon,—he parted from me.

ANG. And whither?

BON. I cannot, within the compass of my sight,
 discern him;
 And yet, I wot, he is not far removed.

ANG. Son! whence this hesitation? It is not seemly.
 Did I propose a question that is hard to answer?
 You know his purpose. Whither is he gone?

BON. Indeed I know not. He will be back anon.

ANG. This is not to my mind. Say, are ye what you 120
 seem?

BON. [Father, these silvery locks, these aged limbs
 would be

Sorry abettors to a crooked heart.]

But, if such claim no reverence, let this well known staff,
 These pious emblems silence loose suspicion.

[Pointing to the palm branches.

ANG. Palmer, [the church hath ever thrown her shel-
 t'ring arms around

Those, who for conscience sake adventure toil and peril: 125
 And 'tis ordained, that courteous rites and hospitable
 usage,

Await the pilgrim wheresoe'er he sojourns.

Such San Martino always hath accorded,

And now affords to you. 'Tis your's to merit them. 130

Our doors are open to you; but we are not wont

To have the hallowed receptacles, where our fathers sleep, 135

Disturb'd by foreign tread. You heed me; peace be
with you. [Exit.

BON. I breathe again. My blood resumes its circuit;
And the cold icy palm, that shook my shiv'ring frame,
Is fled. We had a hair-breadth scape: a little more,
And every hope had been defeated. Lord Florian,
This hot-brained ardor is a treacherous steed,
That will unhorse its rider. I'll hold the strictest vigi-
lance
That he ascend unnoticed.

SCENE II.

Victoria's BOUDOIR.

(Enter the MARCHISE CELESTINI leading VICTORIA.)

CELES. Yes, lady, that is best; 'tis best, upon my credit.

VICT. [To encounter stormy billows and the uncertain
winds,

I like it not.]

CELES. Nor I, upon the credit of a man.

Dad [ocean is a surly bear, that makes no count
Of rank and dignity;] and for [the naughty wind
'T would puff upon a king.]

VICT. We'll rather trust a generous courser's speed.

CELES. A courser! would not a litter answer, think
ye, lady?

I hold it unbefitting quality, to troop
Upon a frisking quadruped.

VICT. And I hold it unwise, my father, in his wrath,
Should chance to overtake us. Would you face him,
Sir?

CELES. Face!—ha, my lady!—The Seignior has a
mighty comely face,
But, truth to say, taking such hasty leave,
'Tis a rencontre that might stand excused.

VICT. Sudden resolves are easiest to perform.
This night, [soon as the friendly shades of evening close,
Be ready,] with our horses, at the garden gate.

CELES. To-night, my lady; yes. I'll instant give di- 20
rections
My scents, my essences, and all my tire be carefully
bestowed

For the rude panniers' jolting.—Love aid us thro' our
troubles.

Be sure you dont forget the jewels!

VICT. Why do a thousand thoughts, unwelcome visi-
tors, crowd in,

To tell me I've renounced a parent's fond affection;
Giv'n the last blow to all his cherish'd hopes;
And, for a full requital of unbounded love,
Struck the keen searching dagger to the heart I lived in,
Out, out, reflection; or thou shalt be my curse.

To thee, proud ducal crown, I bid a long farewell. 30
Thou too, vain bauble, wouldst cajole my reason,
Streaming from thy bright circle brilliant fires,
Like the false meteors, that light the wayless traveller
To an untimely grave.] Thee I can bear to pause on.—

[The rude rabble
Adore the splendour] that thy surface wears,
But all thy thorns are on the head that bears thee.

Enter PAGE.

PAGE. My lady there's a friar that waits without,
Demands admittance.

VICT. Who is he, that would demand an entrance here ?

PAGE. Indeed I know not, for his cowl is down ;
Nor would he tell his name. He says
Lord Celestini knows him well. 40

VICT. Let him come in. (*Exit Page*) Know you the man, my lord !

CELES. Oh yes, my lady. Tis father Jerome, an ecclesiastic,
Whose face belies his capability.

Enter JEROME.

VICT. Father, whom seek you ?

JER. You.

VICT. And for what end ?

JER. To aid you in your flight. I have the vessel ready.

At dusk you must embark. The wind will favor you. 50

CELES. Most sapient father, we do not incline
To venture on the perilous deep. 55

JER. What dost thou start at bugbears ! nay, then,
I've done.

CELES. Hear, father ! we'll take horse, and the sagacious cattle,
Urg'd by the tickling spur, shall shew their heels
To the uncivil halloo of pursuit.

JER. Do as befits you. You'll rue it soon enough.
Bold Carantani is no sloth ; and for the speed,
And mettle of his cavalry, may challenge Italy. 60
You'd better rouse the royal lion when he couches,
Than confront his anger. His hand is dexterous,
And (*he motions as with a sword,*) his weapon deadly.

CELES. Gramercy ! tis a most unsavory thought.

My lady, sure, the ocean will be safest.
 No pattering hoof can scare the listening ear,
 On the white, curly-headed wave.

VICT. For all the world, I would not meet my father's
 rage

Till the first brunt is past.

CELES. Nor I, upon my verity.

JER. I have prepar'd a galliot, that will fly
 Over the bounding deep, swift as a falling star
 Shoots thro' the fields of azure. If you'll be rul'd by
 me,

You shall defy unwelcome followers.

CELES. Indeed, my lady, this seems the most po-
 litical.

(Aside) I have no relish for a naked rapier.

VICT. 'Tis but a choice of evils. Yet, the worst of all,
 Awaits my biding here. I give consent, Sir. (To Celes.)

JER. (To Celes.) Then meet me on the Prado an hour
 hence.

I'll order all things to your heart's content.

Daughter, the saints protect you. (Going out.)

CAR. (Struggling with the Page outside.) Stand off,
 boy!

PAGE. Sir, 'tis my lady's order not to be disturb'd.

CAR. Wouldst dare me, boy! out of the way. I
 will go in.

(Carantani rushes in, Celestini has placed himself behind
 Victoria's chair.)

CAR. Why—whats all this? ha! daughter! who are
 you? (To Jer.)

JER. (Raising his cowl.) You're answered. Let me
 pass. (Going.)

CAR. 'Tis strange to find you here?

JER. I charge you, by our holy church, give me no hindrance. [Exit.]

CAR. (*To Celas.*) What, Sir, have you so soon forgot my interdiction.

Nay then, I'll serve myself with ruder means.

My doors are from this hour closed against ye ;

And if, while I am absent, you're found within my threshold,

The rites of courtesy no more protect you.

Bear that in mind, Sir. To-morrow I'll to the camp.

Thither our hardy youth in arms repair,

To guard our homes, our children, wives, and thee. 100

CELES. Good Signior, do not from the corner of your eye

So grimly measure me. For your approved captainship,

That cap-a-pee snubs danger i'the teeth,

We're much beholden to ye, by my faith.

CAR. Swear by your modesty, or some nice maidenish oath,

That slides so delicately o'er the lisping tongue,

As it would scorn affinity to manhood.

CELES. Adieu, most martial Signior ! I fly, before the flush

That mounts upon your excellency's cheek.

CAR. You cannot do a thing more to my mind. 116

CELES. Signior, I vanish. Sweet lady, ever your most obsequious myrmidon. [Exit.]

CAR. Daughter ! (*Turns and sees her weeping.*) Nay, weep not my child. Come hither : nearer still.

You know, I love you. (*Kisses her.*) On my soul, I love you.

VICT. (*Aside.*) This is too much. (*Aloud.*) What would ye, Sir. (*Sobbing.*)

CAR. Dear treasure of my heart, I would—Do not,
my child,
By ought but love, construe a father's suit !

VICT. Oh name it quickly, Sir.—I'll strive to bend my
will ^{to incline}
To your desire. ^{Yours}

CAR. Indeed I would, Victoria; ('tis a fond parent
asks it,)
I would obtain forgiveness for the duke. 120
Nay,—nay, why looks my child, as tho' she did distrust
Her hearing.—I sue for pardon.—'Tis your father
ask's it.

VICT. Sir!—

CAR. He's culpable, most culpable;—he owns himself
unworthy
The boon, that thus, thro' me, he dares solicit.
Will my sweet child spurn her old father's suit ? ^{= reject}

VICT. Sir,—were ye witness to the scorn, derision,—

CAR. I know it all. I know it; yet faults, howe'er so
great,

Softened by penitence, are more than half absolv'd.

VICT. What would ye have me say, Sir ! 130

CAR. Joy of thy father's heart, make him still more
your debtor.

The bliss that comes unhop'd for brings a double blessing.

Seal then this sweet forgiveness with undoubted proof;
Give him your hand to-night. Nay; do not tremble thus.

VICT. My father!—oh! my father!—I cannot speak.

CAR. I do not wish thee, my sweet love. [These virgin
blushes

On the soft cheek of beauty, do, like the glory round an
angel's head,

Bespeak their heav'nly origin.] Adieu, thou best of daughters.

And now for thee, blind, senseless, disobedient, graceless thing,

We'll fix a bridle on thy unruly mouth,

To bend thy stubborn inclination to thy good. [Exit.

Vict. Down, rebel nature, down, or I am lost. [Exit.

SCENE III.

The dungeon in which Olivia is confined.—A tomb in one corner, with a death's head and bones—On it, the inscription, "Hic jacet, Laura: requiescat in pace."—She appears just rising from her knees as the scene draws.

OLIV. Devotion, what a god-like visitor thou art,
that comest fresh from heav'n

To bind the broken heart. To know thee is to love thee.

By thy aid,

When death knocks at this earthly tenement,

Serene the incorporeal tenant smiles at fate,

Beaming with hope immortal. Here sleeps one, whose
soul

Did pillow on thy bosom ; by all the world but thee

Forsaken. Soon, like her's, my flesh shall rest in hope,

Till it awake in glory. If it be true,

That disembodied spirits watch o'er those

They fondly loved, my sainted mother, from her starry
mansion,

Perchance looks on her child, and humbly waits,

When, from the wreck of this poor, corruptible matter,

I, all immortal as herself, shall rise.

Hark! what noise was that? Again. (*she looks up*)
Have mercy Heav'n!

I have no friend below. (*The bolt undraws; a small door opens in the upper part of the dungeon, just large enough to admit a man, and FLORIAN appears.*)

Save! save! (*She sink on the ground in fright.*)

FLO. By all the saints, 'tis she. (*He jumps down.*)
Look up, my angel, my Olivia. (*He takes her hand.*) 20

OLIV. Who is it calls upon a wretch like me?
Spare me, if you have any pity in your soul.

FLO. Look up, my life. It is your Florian. (*She again sinks fainting.*)

OLIV. That well known voice. Florian!

FLO. It is himself: fear not, my soul's beloved.
I come to liberate, to save you. We must this night
For ever fly Vanessa. What means my sweet, *Vanessa*
My own Olivia? If ever thou hast borne me in thy *+*
thoughts,

If ever thou hast loved thy—

OLIV. If I have loved! Can Florian doubt it then? 30
Oh, ye celestial spheres, that govern day and night
With harmony divine, be you my witnesses,
That I have, (this is no hour for maiden bashfulness, *ox*
Which else had hindered me), that I have cherished for
thee

As loyal, pure, and honorable love,

As ever habited in a chaste virgin's bosom. *= Recall*

Ye eyes, that never more must light upon his form,

Ye ears, that never more must listen to his voice,

Tell him his parting look, his parting words shall be

Sweet as aerial music 'midst the courts of death. 40

FLO. What would my dearest treasure ? Flight, flight
is left her still ;

And will she not embrace it ? Bear witness, thou all-
seeing eye,

The miser dreads not more to touch his hoarded gold
Than I to advocate ought evil to my love.

OLIV. Florian, I will not heed the sophistries of
passion.

It must not, cannot be. My doom is fixed.

Shame waits upon our flight ; and worse than shame,
Peril, peril to thee. [I would not for this deathless soul,

That thou shouldst share an ignominious fate,]
And perish in some loathsome dungeon's gloom.

FLO. Why will Olivia conjure up those phantoms ?

OLIV. They're true as holy writ. The inquisition and
my father's rage

Would hunt us through the world.

FLO. The death of every hope. Is this your fix'd
resolve ?

OLIV. Ah, fixed as adamant ! Had our true loves been
blest,

I think I could have been the fondest wife

That angels ever smil'd on ; but, since the fates have
cross'd us,

[I will not, like a sorry harlot, seize the furtive bliss,
That shame and dread of punishment would poison e'en
in tasting.]

FLO. What says my love ? By the eternal powers, I
swear,

Thou'lt hold me in such bonds as a fond sister draws,

Till holy wedlock speaks its honorable claim

To the full interchange of loyal wedded rites.]

OLIV. I cannot doubt thy purity and truth;
But honor and respect will flee the altar
A fugitive approaches.

FLO. And must I banish thee from my fond breast for
ever?

OLIV. For ever, say'st thou?

FLO. Then life, thou art a sorry lodger;
And thou shalt find at once (*draws his dagger*) thy
anguish and thy cure.

OLIV. (*seizes his arm.*) Some angel hold his arm.
What says this eye that rolls in frenzy? Nay, tell it not,
Lest confirmation of thy horrid purpose
Do strike me dumb, and thou art lost indeed.

FLO. (*throws down the dagger.*) Art thou so void of pity
that wouldst pawn my life
To that unsparing creditor, Remorse? Shalt thou in this
dark prison perish,

While I, a useless worm, bask in the summer sunbeam?

OLIV. And wouldst thou 'gainst a scruple barter all?
To scape a transient pang meet everlasting woe?

What is this span of life to ages infinite?

A drop of wormwood in a sea of joy.

FLO. Thou hast conquered. I war not on my soul.

OLIV. Be this resolve unshaken. Oh! my Florian,
When I am gone, I charge thee by our loves;—
Hark,—oh fly, fly. I hear my jailor's step;—
The Inquisition,—fly, or we both are lost.

FLO. I'll share thy fate.

OLIV. 'Tis madness. (*pushes him from her.*) Distraction,
—if you love me, fly.

FLO. At midnight I'll descend again.

OLIV. No,—no.

FLO. Then let them come. I am at arms with misery.

OLIV. I hear the outer door undone. You never loved me,—fly.

FLO. Well, then, at midnight?

OLIV. If it must be so,—fly instantly.

FLO. Faster than your words. Remember, midnight.

[*He jumps up to the door, which he closes.*]

Enter the PRIORESS and EMILIA, with a basket containing all OLIVIA's splendid trinkets, ornaments and apparel.

PRI. Peace be with you, daughter. I trust this solitude Has bent your haughty will to hear the voice of reason.

You must, (once more I name it), take the veil this night;

Or, while the sun completes his annual course,

You here shall undergo such wholesome discipline

As may estrange you from the vanities you've left,

To taste that peace that passeth knowledge.

OLIV. Madam, you see a wretch weighed down with sorrow. What would ye have?

PRI. What would I have? (*to Emilia*) Daughter, your gentle eloquence

Should steal upon the most obdurate heart.] Speak then, I pray ye.

EMIL. Sister,—If you can stifle earthly passion's voice, And lift your thoughts above the firmament,

Striving to gain those wells whose living waters fail not,

You may, within the cloister's calm retreat,

Glide smooth and gently, like a chrystal stream,

To the vast ocean where we all must meet.

But if,

PRI. Hold, my daughter. Your words should fall on a distemper'd spirit,

Like oil on the stormy billows. My daughter, (*To Oliv.*)

The cankering cares that prey on worldly natures

Are strangers here.—We'll leave these trappings,

The customary toll that vanity subdued

Lays at the heav'nly altar. If't please you heed our bidding,

This, your meek sister, shall at midnight hour approach, 120

To deck you for the glorious bridal. Come, come, thou weary traveller,

Like a wise virgin trim thy lamp, and enter

The courts of holiness.—(*She treads on the dagger which Florian had left.*)

Ha,—defend us all ye saints,—What's this?

(*She takes it up.*) What!—ha!—Rebellious miscreant! wouldst thou slink away

By guilt immeasurable? Hardened impenitent! Was such thy wicked counsel? X X

Nay, nay, there little needs the vagueness of that look, X

To witness to thy most accursed thought.

EMIL. Oh speak, my sister, speak.—Is speech denied thee?

By some mute motion plead thy innocence. 130

No word,—no sign,—undone,—undone.

OLIV. (*Aside.*) My memory to be a prey to shame.

EMIL. Do thy lips move? If thou hast any touch of pity, 4. m. 10
6

Disown this treason to thy God.

OLIV. What shall I say?

EMIL. Say, say any thing.—Say, but, thou art not guilty.

Still silent?—

OLIV. Now is the bitterness of death,

EMIL. Olivia, thou hast wrung my very heart,
And pity strives with horror. Yet, yet there's hope, 140
If thou wouldst call on him, who from his starry throne,
Surveying at a glance creation's bounds,
Tempers the ills his providence ordains.

PRIO. Daughter, go to. I have an argument more apt
To win upon a mundane nature.—(To Oliv.) 'Tis at
your peril sincerely

To execute this deed, and quench the immortal spark
In utter darkness. Meanwhile, the mortal reliques,
(Such is our law) ignobly born upon a slavish ass,
Must at the market cross be naked laid. soul

There, the rude tittering rabble, shall with gaze obscene, 150
Feast their coarse gloating eyes upon that dainty form, 52
That must from thence, bereav'd of pious obsequies,
Over the rocks that skirt our town be cast,
A prey to ravenous birds and the encroaching tide.

OLIV. Madam, for mercy's sake forbear. Do with me
what you will.

PRIO. Daughter, the gate is never shut against
The truly penitent. Will you receive the veil?

OLIV. Yes,—yes,—oh, so may angels bless you,
leave me.

EMIL. (taking her hand.) Sweet sister, peace be with
you. May its halcyon breath
Speak comfort to your soul.

PRIO. Daughter, at midnight be prepared. Farewell. 160
[Exeunt.]

OLIV. Oh, would it were eternal.—I am sunk low
indeed.

[Throws herself on the ground. The Scene closes.]

SCENE IV.

*ANGELO's Cell.**Enter JEROME and ANGELO.*

JER. 'Tis sure as death ; by threats I worm'd it from
old Agatha.

ANG. (*considering.*) But then to gain admittance
to her ?

JER. A wily plot, forsooth, that needs contrivance. ox

ANG. What's to be done good Jerome ?

JER. You should know best. [Time is a winged mes- v
senger

That will not stop to parley.] The night draws on
apace.

ANG. I have no clue to guide me to this dungeon.
What if I move the Prioress to give me access,
As I would offer ghostly admonition. Ha ! What think-
est thou ?

JER. That [you would find those stones lend a more 10
willing ear.] 504

ANG. No, 'tis not worth the venture ; and yet my every
thought,

Withdrawn from meaner things, would goad me to
revenge.

Is there nought feasible comes cross your brain, good
Jerome ?

JER. No, not a whit :—yet hold ;—what think ye of
these palmers ?

ANG. Ha ! Palmers ! Jerome ?

JER. The younger is in height not much unlike
Rosalba.

And then his foolish antics, and burrowing like a mole. ox

ANG. On my life thou hast it ! 'Tis indeed Rosalba ;
And this some secret entrance to the subterraneous
dungeon.

JER. May be. 20

ANG. What if it is ; Rosalba may contrive the means
of rescue.

JER. Why then come worst, the bird is flown ! you'r
sure to find the cage.

ANG. Don't trifle. Could I but gain her ear ?

JER. Belike she'd long not have the use of words to
thank ye.

ANG. What must be done ? Viable

JER. Nothing, till night, the friend to all that's evil,
Has drawn her curtains round : then to your work. B

I'll strait give orders that these sorry palmers

On no account be let to stir without,

Till you have spoken with them. So shall we hold them 30
sure,

Till we have eas'd their labors.

ANG. 'Tis well advis'd, good Jerome, you'll make my
debt most heavy—

JER. Nor care how soon 'tis paid. But twilight steals
along,

I must away. The wind waits on our galliot.

This chicken heart will need a manlier second = 2000 1/2

To draw his precious mistress from her covert.

Glad tidings of their flight shall greet your ear anon.

[Exit Jerome.

ANG. Why, how [this fellow labours at devilish mis- ox
chief,

For some few dirty ducats.] And shall I,
 I, that am stirred by the infernal fuel 40
 That revenge enkindles, [shall I stand boggling at a
 shadow,
 Thrown cross my path by sickly conscience?] Out on't.
 'Tis but a bit for knaves to bridle fools with.

(A knocking at the door of the cell.)

Starts.) Why start I thus at this intruding knock,
 As it would toll departed virtue's knell.
 Who's there? (going to the door.)

MONK (*without*). Holy father, a summons from the
 Prioress
 Demands your presence strait, on matters of such
 moment
 As will not brook delay.

ANG. Good, my son, say, I'll attend forthwith. These 50
 worldly cares
 Are a sore let, and hindrance to the mind,
 That's communing on better things. (*Aside.*) This may
 respect the novice.
 I would I could procure an audience with her;
 An audience brief, but fatal.

SCENE V.

The PRIORESS's Parlour.

The PRIORESS is discovered sola.

Now shall I reach the point I long have strained at.
 And for this crooked spirit, that would prompt her
 To lay rash hands upon herself, I dread it not. Her girl-
 ish fears,

And maiden terrors of obscene exposure,
 Shall check such deadly purpose. 'Twere not fitting
 Slænder, that hath the lynx's beam and adder's fang,
 Should bring our house to trouble, questioning her
 death.

Let her be once profess'd, and I have touch'd the goal.
 It cannot fail, but Carantani mark his gratitude,
 By some rich gift to San Martino's house.

Enter ANGELO.

Hail, father ! I greet you with a tenfold welcome.
 The sword of truth hath conquered, and this night our
 novice,
 With free and full consent, doth take the veil.

ANG. (*Aside.*) This is a deathful blow. It chills my
 very heart.

(*Aloud.*) Lady, this change is sudden, wondrous sudden.

PRIOR. It seems as though it were not to your liking.

ANG. Is't fitting for a holy man, to let tumultuous joy
 Tread on sobriety, as empty worldlings do ?

PRIOR. Your pardon, father, that I have scann'd you
 wrongfully.

There is no reason, in a soul redeemed,
 To cause the cloud that hangs upon your brow.

ANG. You judge amiss. May heaven increase our
 church

With faithful servants. But I hold it ill,
 Such solemn pledge be lightly undertaken ;
 Lightly, and hastily. Indeed, this change is sudden.

PRIOR. From her own pure, unfettered choice it sprung.

ANG. What if despair hath hatch'd it ? 'Tis a fearful
 thing,

To approach the throne of God with falsehood on the tongue.

PRIO. [These pious scruples mark a perfect mind. *Handwritten: 150*]

ANG. Peace, lady. Perfection, daughter of the skies, *Handwritten: 150*
Is not for a poor worm, a creature of a day. *Handwritten: 150*

I do but as my sacred office prompts me.

PRIO. Then set your fears at rest. The fight is over. *Handwritten: 150*
Olivia, snatch'd by a mighty arm from the last stage of guilt, *Handwritten: 150*

With soul new wak'd to-day, bends every thought on heav'n.

ANG. What say you? (*aside.*) [A glimmering hope re- *Handwritten: 150*
vives.]

PRIO. Her mind, with devilish wiles bewildered, once *Handwritten: 150*
did compass:
Looks on the dagger.) But, horror ties my tongue. Suffice it, that she from her

Threw the traitorous steel with scorn, and in [unfeigned penitence,

Pants for the vow that consecrates her virgin heart. *Handwritten: 150*

ANG. (*aside.*) She wants but nerve to act. I must restrain my joy.

PRIO. What [holy light beams from your speaking eye.] *Handwritten: 150*
Haste then, good father; be all preparation made
That well becomes the grandeur of our house.
Let the rich tapestries be unfurl'd; [our altars blaze *Handwritten: 150*
With radiant splendor;] and our full rob'd choir
Wake with their sweetest strains, devotion, love, and praise.

At midnight shall the noble sisters meet:

Victoria, a blooming bride, to plight her faith to Milan;

Olivia, casting off the yoke of sin, to seek a meed *Handwritten: 150*

Of joy unspeakable and full of glory.

ANG. All shall be duly ordered;—and, if it please
you so,

I'd fain assist the maid with holy converse ;

Which ever deepest sinks when in strict privacy.

PRIO. Father, she did entreat most earnestly,
To pass the intermediate hours in prayer and solitude.

ANG. 'Tis well. I stand absolv'd of slackness in my
calling.

(*Aside.*) I must not seem too eager. See her I will. This
goodly wheat

Shall in the full ear fall an offering to hate.

(*Aloud.*) I will prepare the convent. Peace be with you,
madam.

60

ACT V.

SCENE I.

*The Marble Chamber in Carantani's Palace.*CARANTANI *solus.*

SHEW me the timorous fool that at some mountain's foot
 Prowls for a beaten path, while bolder spirits scale it ;]
 'Tis so with fortune. She looks askaunt on prudence,
 The while success goes hand in hand with daring.
 Why, here am I now, by obsequious winds,
 Like a trim galley, borne upon the flood
 To the desired haven. Hail, duchess ; hail, lady duchess
 Victoria ! why [twill make me young again to see
 Envy, with ferret eye, pout on my lady duchess.]

Enter the DUKE of MILAN.

DUKE. Good even, Signior.

CAR. A duchess—were she an emperor's bride, the
 golden tiar

Would stream more brilliant on her polished front.

DUKE. Signior, good even.

CAR. Oh, your grace is welcome. How do you, sir ?—
 [It is a sultry and oppressive air to-night.]

DUKE. Could I find leisure, sir, to note the atmosphere,

I should be little worth the rarest jewel

That 'ere hath sparkled on this vast terrene.

I count the loitering seconds, till the matchless bride

In all the blaze of beauty dim my ravish'd sight.

CAR. 'Tis yet not nigh upon the hour.

DUKE. How grave and slow the leaden minutes creep,
That tediously protract an ardent lover's bliss ;]

Already have I sent to urge the prioress to haste.

CAR. You shall not war with time, what's soonest
done is best.

What ho—there—(*Enter servants.*) Go to my daughter's
chamber.

Tell her we would be debtors to her toilet

For her sweet company,—hark, sirrah, on the instant.

[*Exit servants.*]

She did request that no intruding voice

Might, till the hour drew on, disturb her maiden soli-
tude.

Enter SERVANT.

Lady Victoria is not in her chamber, sir.

CAR. Not in her chamber—oh—the heated air
Has drawn her forth to court [the slumb'ring breeze
That dozes on the glassy water :] go, seek her in the
gardens.

[*Exit servant.*]

'Tis hard upon the time ; no, thrice the sentinel

Should call the hour before the dead of night.

What ho—who waits there ? Have ye no ears ?

Enter a number of SERVANTS.

Go fetch my daughter from the gardens, tell her I'd speak with her.

Fly, haste. Away with ye.

DUKE. 'Tis strange, my lord, your daughter should be absent. 40

CAR. Ha! strange. No, no, your grace—she's used to walk at even. 41

DUKE. (*aside.*) I've some forboding all will not be right. 42

CAR. She should be here anon—how goes the hour?—
(*A clock strikes.*) Hark—what only nine—it should be more— 43

What? Where are all my slaves? Ho. Baptist—
Ambrose. 44

Ho there—drones—varlets—have ye found my daughter? 45

Enter SERVANTS.

1st SERV. My lord, we've search'd each walk, bower, alley,

Calling upon her name.

CAR. 'Tis false—go look thro' all the palace—what Victoria,

Victoria—s'death! Where can she be? Victoria,
Do you hear me— 50

DUKE. Let me go seek her, sir—I may be fortunate. 51

CAR. Hold for a moment—can she have gone to vespers? 52

1st SERV. My lord, it grieves me—

CAR. (*striking him*). Villain, 'tis a lie—what dare you tell me. 53

DUKE. Signior, be pacified, let him but speak. 54

CAR. (*to Servant.*) Audacious pickthank—be careful
what you utter.

DUKE. Pray ye, my lord—it may import us much;
say on good friend.

CAR. Speak, idiot—d'ye wait for this? (*Clasps his
hand on his stiletto.*)

SERV. (*hesitating.*) My lord—'tis sore—sad news—
Some hours since,

[*(I heard it but this instant,)*]

My lady was seen to quit the postern—with—

CAR. (*rushes on him with his dagger but is held by the
Duke.*)

Thy foul tongue sha'n't name him.—I know the wretch
thou mean'st.

My curse be on his head. Release me, sir.

Search every nook and corner in the city—I'll drag them
forth,

If I should draw the bolts of sulphurous hell.

*He rushes off the stage, followed by the Duke,
Servants, &c.*

SCENE II.

ANGELO'S Cell.—*The crosier and his robes lying on a
table; the sandals on the floor near it.—He is discovered
in a musing posture.*

Now night has covered with her inky pall
Th' obtrusive face of nature—all is hush'd—
And idle fools, whose impious breath would raise
An altar to me, loftier than their maker's,
Yield to that power whose solemn mockery
Mimics the callous herald of corruption.

[No sound presumes to war with hooded silence,
Save when low peals of distant thunder roll,
Or the hoarse murmur of the booming surge
Forever beats upon the sullen shore.] 10

These suit with souls where peace shall dwell no more,
And this the hour when troubled spirits wake
To brood on darkness,—myself the darkest of them all.

(*He looks on the vial.*) Come black revenge, come to my
heart of hearts,

With blood-stain'd talon grapple firm thy hold ;

[Let the red glare that flashes from thy eye,
Chase every softer feeling] from my breast,
Till, with awak'd remembrance of my wrongs,
I willing yield my very soul to thee.

(*A loud peal of thunder is heard over head.*)

[Why shrink I like a trembling coward thus—
The very elements tune up my nerves to action,
And heav'n's artillery sounds the dread amen.

(*A knocking at the door. He opens it, and
Jerome enters with a lantern.*)

ANG. Thou could'st not find me at a meeter time.

JER. To business then. The palmers have withdrawn
themselves unseen;

The next we'll hear shall be Olivia's flight.

ANG. Forbid it—no, I cannot name the word—what's
to be done ?

JER. Why, to the passage instantly. If all be safe,
We'll both descend. Should it conduct us to Olivia,
I'll stay without conceal'd, while you accost her.

ANG. Suppose we chance to encounter young Rosalba ? 20

JER. He must be seized—the inquisition will take
care of him !

ANG. He is not one will easily surrender.

JER. (*Pointing to a dagger and a pair of pistols under his garment.*)

Have these no virtue that can stop his tongue?

Here (*gives one.*) Come—we should be going.

(*Lights the lantern at the Monk's lamp.*)

But hold a moment—this is a doughty job,

It should be at the least five hundred ducats.]

ANG. They shall be yours, good Jerome.

JER. Enough—you've gone too deep to fob me. Come.

What—colour on your ashy cheek. Nay, this is new.

ANG. I follow, honest Jerome—(*aside looking on the vial.*) Olivia, swallow this,

And thou dost seal the bond that hate has drawn.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

OLIVIA's *Dungeon, she is discovered, dressed in her richest Robes.*

Emilia, thou would'st wake a final lingering hope;

'Tis but a flag to stem the mountain torrent,

[*A transient beam,*] that 'ere its warmth is felt

[*The frowning cloud eclipses;* oh no, no, no, my kinsmen have no heart

To step between my father's haughty mandate

And a poor trembling maid. Yet I'll make trial of their hardihood,

And at the altar claim their sheltering arm to save me;

Failing in that, here shall my sorrows close,

Here shall my sufferings find a worthy end.

I will not with iniquitous breath lie in the face of heaven,

Nor shall they force me to these hated vows.

Earth must to earth, and dust to dust again,

But rob'd in glory will the spirit rise,

By pitying angels wafted to its home.

(*Takes up her veil.*) Why e'en this curious lawn is as the
solid buttress

To the thin veil that parts the finite from eternity.

'Tis a fearful thought. [Already feverish heat

Would seem to parch the failing springs of life,

Unreal shapes to swim in dizzy circles round me,

And the bewildered eye, a poor faint hearted traitor,

To woo the false illusion. Hark! some step approaches,

It should be Florian.

(*The door opens, and the Abbot appears.*)

Oh mercy! (*she sinks on the floor with clasped hands.*)

Heav'n have mercy.

ANG. Cease those vain terrors. Behold the Abbot,
Angelo.

OLIV. Out, horrible spectre! Appalling phantom, out!
I dare not meet that smile again.

(*She turns away her face.*)

ANG. Daughter, look up—in me behold a friend.

OLIV. The voice is Angelo's—but what has he to do
With the sweet name of friendship? Why dost thou glare
upon me thus? (To Angelo.)

ANG. Daughter compose yourself. I come the mes-
senger of peace.

OLIV. If I have any faculty of reason, (*rising*)
Thou art the cold, proud, stern, unbending Angelo,
Abbot of San Martino.

ANG. I am that Angelo.

OLIV. If thou didst come to banquet cruelty

With gazing on the misery thou hadst pictured,
Go back, thou hast no triumph here.

ANG. Daughter, you much mistake the motive of my coming.

OLIV. Whence this intrusion then? What would'st thou with me? 40

It is the hour that murder shrugs his withered sides,
And steals from forth his covert.

ANG. Is such your greeting to the blessed crozier? *crozier*

OLIV. Avaunt, blasphemer! If thou dost think on evil,

My life is given thee for a prey. If not,
Once more I charge thee leave me; for my untainted nature

Holds no communion with a mind like thine. *this communion*

ANG. 'Tis meet that piety should render good for evil.

Daughter, these vainly glittering robes denote

Thou art about to seal thy condemnation; 50

And dost thou think this perjury shall avail

To lengthen out thy worthless span of being. *deceit*

Thou art deceived. Death, justly due, awaits thee;

A slow, a lingering death—within these horrid walls

Shalt thou be brought to perish. I know the Prioress well.

OLIV. You have my answer—we meet before the altar.

ANG. Your blood be on your head—I would have pointed you

A speedy, honorable, sure retreat;

Approv'd by reason, consecrate to peace.

Nay, do you hesitate—my power is equal to my will, 60
And both shall emulate the foremost place.

OLIV. I am a lorn and miserable wretch
That know not where to turn me. What must I do?

ANG. Do but as noble birth, and nobler spirit should,
And you are free—for ever.

OLIV. If there's no guilt attaches to the deed—ex-
plain.

ANG. Necessity, a charter'd freeman, shapes his va-
ried laws
To square with the occasion.

OLIV. But good must not be looked for at the hands
of evil.

ANG. [Exceptionous casuistry would fool away the time,] ⁵⁷⁰
Till you have lost your sole alternative—
Your fate resolves itself upon a bold decision.

OLIV. Name it.

ANG. Dare you.

OLIV. Misery dares any thing that is not sinful.

ANG. Is it not sin to welcome useless suffering.
You have to choose between a lingering death,
And—

OLIV. Hear me. If sure and certain hope shall to
the vast unknown
Conduct my wearied steps, I heed not transient evil; ⁵⁸⁰
The present is the veriest naught against futurity. — ^{nothing}
As well you might compare the statuary,
Who seems to animate the sculptured marble,
With him who breath'd the breath of life immortal
Into this corporal frame, and form'd the soul
With all its train of godlike attributes;
Or set the trifling art that makes the fountain play,
'Gainst his, who, in the hollow of his mighty hand,
Majestic ocean measur'd;—likened this earthly vale

To Paradise, or the faint ray yon glimmering taper sheds — 90
To the vast lamps that light the vault of heaven.

ANG. Farewell, I leave ye to your fate.

OLIV. Yet, if there were a solitary outlet—

ANG. One there is—one only—

OLIV. If it be honest, whence this fear to name it? —

AND. Honest!—warp'd prejudice oft takes the most 100
alarm

At simplest remedies.

OLIV. This tedious preface does but mock suspense.

ANG. And what is life but pieclad mockery? 5

Stretching at that which never is attained— 1

Impatient of the present, shuddering at the future;

Daughter, be wise—drink this—(takes out his vial) and
sleep for ever. 100

OLIV. [Thou saintly hypocrite! Was this thy deadly
errand; 5

Out, fiend abhorr'd!] Nor with thy poisonous breath 5

Cloud the unspotted mirror of the mind,

Whose polish'd surface, to the shrinking eye,

Reflects thee horrid, hideous, as thou art—

When [from the burning mount the Almighty voice

In the loud thunder spoke,] “thou shalt not kill,” 100

Did not the awful canon point its prohibition

Against the worst of murderers? did it not forbend

The power to immolate this animated dust

At will? Can reason view without affright

The creature 'gainst the Creator madly arm'd?

The perishable with the imperishable wrath,

With hellish malice seeking to conspire

'Gainst that which is immortal?]

ANG. [Your reasoning, daughter, is most apposite.— 5
and yet this very noon

You searched with friendlier eye the dagger's edge ;
At least 'tis rumour'd so throughout the convent. 120

OLIV. (*aside.*) 'Tis the last misery to be the sport of
shame ;

Yet, 'twere worth Florian's life to hold this secret.

(*Aloud*) Enormous villain. What could goad thee on
To compass the destruction of my soul ?

ANG. [Hate, rooted hate, to thy accursed house.] 5

In early youth I lov'd with tenderest passion

One gentle, soft, and heavenly fair as thou art.

She gave me all her heart ; our houses were consenting ;

But on the eve before our nuptial rites,

Heated with wine, seduced by frantic appetite of gain, 130

A fellow noble tempted me to dicing—

I madly rush'd upon the brink of ruin,

Doubling each stake with desperate enterprize

Till I had set my fortune on a cast.

I cast, and all was lost. My treacherous rival, such he
was,

With specious offers of relief, persuaded me

To take upon my bond a thousand ducats ;

Then mounting on my swiftest steed (my unsuspecting
youth

Saw not the dark design that lurked behind his offer),

I sought to fly disgrace, assigning my fair patrimony 140

To liquidate the sums he had spoiled me of. Himsel
alone

Entrusted with the secret of my residence—too soon he
stood unmasked,

For I was seized, and to a distant prison hurried ;

Friendless, bankrupt, unknown, to answer for my bond.

Meantime 'twas rumoured that by midnight robbers,

I had been set upon and murdered, and my mangled
carcase

To the rude deep consigned. [A hireling wretch was
brib'd

To stop enquiry] with this doleful tale. My beloved bride
Distracted, sunk in grief, unconscious what she did,
Was by a sordid parent wrought upon, and ere twelve
moons

Had sped their flight through the ethereal concave,
Her faltering lips confirmed the hard wrung promise
That to a hated rival gave the idol of my soul.

OLIV. 'Tis more than mortal effort to forgive such
trespass.

ANG. At length, some tedious years in durance, by
public jubilee

Releas'd, I drew the healthful breeze; chains, damps,
and scanty pittance,

Had sorely discomposed me. When the bright orb of
day

Beam'd on me free but ruined, by an oath most dreadful
I bound myself to be avenged, and sought these gloomy
walls

Best covert for designs that shun the light.

Here have I dwelt unknown; and ris'n to highest office
By bitter penance, fast and guise austere.

OLIV. Deemed little less than saint. Say, does he
yet live?

Alas, thy rival—

I tremble to look on thee. Thou art a man of blood.

ANG. Here like a pelican upon the craggy rock
I've watch'd the live-long-day; and fed revenge
Till my heart's core is emptied.

OLIV. (*falling upon her knees.*) The wretch still lives?

Oh leave him till the judge of all,
Before assembled worlds, pronounce his sentence.
If you do think on heav'n's bliss, spare him.

ANG. Thy father is the man—

OLIV. (*hiding her face.*) 'Tis finished.

ANG. These gestures yield no pleasure to my eye—
Come, rouse yourself, I've but a word for you;
Your second self, your Florian de Rosalba,
His life is in my hands.

OLIV. He's lost.

ANG. Not if you chuse to save him.

OLIV. I, (*jumps up*) how! Oh say but how?

ANG. He stands accus'd before the holy office,
In the high pains and penalties that wait
On the attempt to separate a nun
From the pure bosom of the church.

OLIV. Oh say how I can save him?

ANG. With me rests the commitment, with you his
safety,
For life shall ransom life. (*He takes the vial.*) The choice
is yours.

This essence is so subtle that without a pang
'Twill in a moment seal each sense in death.

OLIV. Give—give it me. (*takes the vial.*) Live, live,
my Florian, my death
Is doubly blest since it is life to you.

Yet—hold—thy verdict cannot blanch self-murder,
And Florian would spurn a joyless span of life
Won with Olivia's everlasting death!
I dare not pause, lest love should silence duty.

(*She dashes the vial from her.*)

ANG. Adieu—thou art thyself the executioner.
Of all thou most didst value, and foiled by thee
My hate shall heavier fall upon thy Florian.

(He gets up through the little door closing it after him.)

OLIV. *(Recovering after a short interval.)* Is this the
unsettled dream of troubled sleep? Where
am I?

Where and what? The solid surface of these walls,
The substance of this fleshy arm, denotes
My form material, this a mortal keep.
Nay more, the crazy store that memory conjures up,
Retains a thought that bears the stamp of reason.
'Tis Florian's life—to warn him of his danger—
Yet how, or where; or what can I resolve on—
For if he seek me here—'tis ruin.

FLORIAN *opening the trap-door jumps down.*

OLIV. Fly—oh fly—you rush upon the lions!

FLOR. What means my love?

OLIV. Your life—they seek your life—the inquisition.
If you have any pity for a heart that—

FLOR. And leave you to be dragg'd before the altar?
The robes that should have deck'd a blushing bride
Speak to their barbarous aim,—it shall not be.

OLIV. You do but sport with life—away—
If you would have my death be peaceful—fly—

FLO. Cruel Olivia! do you upbraid me with a coward's
fear?

Shall I for safety to this paltry mould
Meanly forsake my love?

OLIV. 'Tis sore to mock my woman's weakness thus,
By the sweet memory of days for ever fled;

I charge you, as you love my soul, begone—

FLO. And see that face no more—'tis a tyrant's order.

OLIV. 'Tis the injunction of the truest heart
That ever bow'd to love. (*Aside.*) I dare not tell him of
my only hope,
His unyok'd violence might ruin it.

FLO. Hear me, I've horses ready—a ladder at the
walls—

In a few hours we reach the Tuscan boundary—

Come, my heart's joy, my friend, my sister.

OLIV. It must not be—no, never—'Tis a tale your ears
will tingle at.

My father—I cannot tell it—Florian—

[*She takes off a picture from her neck.*

When you do look on this, think on our loves as such
That heaven did consecrate, and snatch'd the ungathered
flower,

That it might flourish in eternal bloom.

FLO. My fate is twined round thine—Love joined our
lives,

And be we not divided in our deaths—

Come, come, Olivia, you must escape—

[*Seizes her in his arms.*

OLIV. Release me—oh—(*shrieks.*)

[*The Monk and JEROME rush down and seize
FLORIAN; he lets go OLIVIA who faints, and
draws his dagger.*

ANG. 'Tis sacrilege—yield on your life!

FLO. Off, murderous villain.

ANG. We seize you in the church's name.

FLO. Ruffians, perdition on you.

ANG. Surrender, or you're dead.

FLO. Thou liest, villain as thou art.

[*They fight, and FLORIAN after wounding JEROME is himself wounded.*

JER. Cut his comb—down with him—

He's but scratch'd me.

OLIV. Help, help—there is no human arm can help him—

FLO. Take that, assassin.

[*They drag FLORIAN through the door, which closes, and a pistol shot is fired off within.*

FLO. Olivia—oh—

OLIV. Oh, death is in that scream.

[*She goes to the door, the scene closes.*

SCENE IV.

The Gardens with the door leading to the vaults closed.

BONARIO appears wrapped in his cloak under the sycamore. A violent storm of thunder, lightning and hail. A ladder of ropes at the garden wall, on the side of the stage.

BON. Surely there's war in heaven ; [th' avenging spirit is gone forth

Upon the mighty waters, and with shrieks that rend the skies,]

Backs the wild fight of moonstruck elements.

'Tis such a night the very dead should wake.

Lord Florian—would he were back—I dare not leave

My watch to search him. 'Tis an anxious time.

Good angels, if amidst the tempest's fury

Such be abroad, receive the sweet Olivia

Under your sheltering wings. Hark! there's a knock

Again—Heaven send them safe—This peeling thunder
Is a rough cantion to a tender maid. 10

[*He lifts up the door and starts back.*

ANG. (*comes up.*) Stand off, and let me pass.

BON. Your name?

ANG. The ab—fool—out of the way.

BON. (*drawing his sword.*) You pass not till you've answered me.

ANG. (*aside.*) An infant's lifted arm would make me tremble.

(*Aloud.*) Off, 'ere I strike thee to the ground—

BON. That wild eye—and blood upon thy hand—Stay,
Or I'll smite thee.

ANG. (*rushes on him, and he is thrown to the ground in the struggle.*) Grey-headed dotard, you provoke your fate. 20

BON. Murder—robbers—mur—

DUKE. (*from without.*) Who calls there?—haste—climb
yon tree that tops the wall.

SERVANT. (*on the top of the wall.*) A ladder's ready
placed, my lord.

ANG. (*rising hastily.*) Whither to fly—I dare not enter
here.

What if the parting spirit meet me face to face!

This darkness is appalling, but 'tis my only shelter. X

How guilt can palsy up the pride of manhood.

[*He descends, closing the door.*

DUKE and SERVANTS descend by the ladder with torches.

DUKE. What ancient man is this?—Raise him;
Yon steps, that should have sped a murderer's flight,
Have brought his victim life and safety: such are the ways 30
of heaven,
o o verrule the petty craft of man, X

BON. The villain's savage gripe had well nigh ended me.

DUKE. What villain, friend? Has he escap'd?

BON. (*aside.*) 'Tis Milan—He must not find my lord, or we're undone.

DUKE. Friend you are safe—which way fled he?

BON. (*aside.*) Yet my poor lord may be set-on by—

DUKE. Fear has confused him; speak, friend—we saw the ruffian

That would have slain you—How did he scape us?

SERV. My lord, he seemed to sink into the earth.

DUKE. Brave youth, reserve this tale to fright your valiant fellows with.

Yet hold—I know not how he could have passed us,

Our torches threw so bright a flame around;

'Tis strange! There may be vaults beneath this garden:

Search well the spot; look to the ladder, some of ye.

[BONARIO *points to the other side of the stage.*

He points this way—this way—lead fellow.

SERV. My lord, behold the door; 'tis scanty shut.

An it were worth my life,

I'd swear by this he dodged us.

BON. (*aside.*) Any way we're ruined;

His palmer's garb alone may chance to save him.

DUKE. Wait some of ye above, and see that none escape,

While I descend. The steps too marked with blood

This fearful night is an apt cloak for murder.]

[*They descend, BONARIO following the DUKE.*

SCENE V.

The Chapel of San Martino.

The chapel and altar-piece splendidly decorated and brilliantly illuminated. The company assembled on the sides and come in while the Prioress is speaking to herself.

The PRIORESS comes forward.

PRI. There is some secret heaviness that sits upon the abbot.

Spite of his settled face and placid 'haviour,
He bears a restless mind. I cannot dive into
The dark obscure with which he veils those counsels,
That note deep interest in Olivia's fate.

[He calls this speedy ceremony, unhallowed haste,
And urged me with importunate intreaty,
To offer hindrance to this welcome act,
Biding till morrow 'ere she take her vows.

I rather lean to Carantani's humour.

Incertitude but spurs me on to finish,

What is so well begun.

(*She retires to the side.*)

Come hither gentle daughters.

Enter EMILIA and BERTHA.

Be it your charge to lead our pious maiden
To the sweet sacrifice. Go, fetch her to the parlour.

[*Exeunt Emilia and Bertha.*]

Enter AGATHA.

AGA. Madam, the abbot is not in his cell—
The crosier, and the sacred sandals, with his robes do
lie;

But he, whose heart is clad in holiest garb,
Is absent. So father Laurence hath announced.

PRIOR. 'Tis new, one most exact in the minutest calling,

Should chuse this season for a dilatory part.

No matter: let the deep organ fill the hollow breeze;
Its lengthened notes shall summon him to prayer.

Go, bid our sisters in procession move.

The organ sounds.—The sisters of the convent move up to one side of the chapel, the monks to the other; and arrange themselves while the following hymn is chaunted.

The veil, the habit, and the ring, carried in the procession.

Father of truth and holy light,

From the throne of mercy look;

A virgin sister deign to write

In thy everlasting book.

Come, sweet seraph, hover o'er her,

Breathing peace, and breathing love;—

Through life's journey gently lead her

To thy own abodes above.

Enter CARANTINI.

CAR. Stop these rites—where is my daughter?

My poor injured Olivia!—give her to my arms.

1st NOBLE. What mean you, sir?

CAR. What mean I, sir? that I abhor myself
For the cold pride that freezed my blood.

Give me, my suffering injured child.

Where is she, madam?

(To the Prioress)

PRIOR. My lord, she will be here anon.

CAR. Anon, is an eternity, till all the wrongs I've
done her,
Are blotted by forgiveness from the records of her brain.
She is Rosalba's bride. Nay, stare not on me thus;
I'll shew ye I've the power to execute my will.
Tried constancy and love like theirs demands a blessing,
A father's blessing, and may the King of kings
Confirm it.

FIRST NOBLE. We looked to see Victoria's nuptials.

CAR. Peace, peace; that name is like the fretted
porcupine,
It's sound is a sharp quill that pierces to my heart.

FIRST NOBLE. My lord, what cruel hap is this?

CAR. Oh, sir, the cruellest pang a father can endure
She's fled, my lord, fled most disgracefully, and with her—
But spare me, 'tis blisters to my tongue. Come,
Have ye no eye to mark a father's feelings,
That you do hold him from his longlost child.
She's here; yet how! what knocks upon my heart!

*Enter OLIVIA, led in distracted between EMILIA and
BERTHA.*

CAR. Heaven bless my child; come hither, dearest;
What, dost not know thy fond, repenting, savage father?

OLIV. Oh, sweet sir, I know you passing well;
'Tis Jephtha, who slew his daughter for a silly quean.

(laughs.)

CAR. The wrath divine is on me—I have deserved it all.

OLIV. Signior, an' any gossip twit your length of
visage,

Tell 'em you have a patent to look grave.

CAR. *(falling on her neck.)* Oh, my child, Olivia.

OLIV. Oh, are ye for a pastoral? I'll be your Iphigene.

CAR. My child, I thought to bring thee peace.

OLIV. Peace! cunning sir: you've sought a jack-o'-lantern;

It flies when from our cradles we get up,
And meets us when we lay us in our graves.

CAR. My child, my child. Oh, Milan, canst thou look
upon my child unmov'd!

*Enter the DUKE and BONARIO, leading in FLORIAN,
supported by Servants.*

The ABBOT is brought in, guarded by other servants.

DUKE. (*stepping up to CARANTINI.*) Sir, I am ill at
heart. Blood has been spilt to-night;
And for this noble gentleman, whose sand is ebbing fast,
Your daughter's words shall smooth the path he's going.

FLO. Olivia, if you have pity for a faithful heart,
Tell me true love survives this mortal death.

OLIV. What say'st thou of survivorship, good friend?
Thou art an almanack that's hastening out of date;
Count all thy yesterdays, for thou shalt tell no morrow.

FLO. Sweet innocent, come near—nearer, my love.
My eyes grow dim—let thine but bid me hope
To meet in heaven, and here we'll part in peace.

OLIV. Oh, my poor head, thou art—(stay, this sad
world

Is full of treachery). When knaves hang all that wear
an honest look,

Thou shalt not want a gallows. [*She sinks down by him.*

CAR. Oh, sir, it rends my very heart to look upon her.
Lord Florian, speak—who has done this deed?

FLO. Two ruffians—yon saintly hypocrite, and one
more savage,

Did set upon me; the other I wounded, when from his
belt

Drawing the murderous tube, he sped a fatal ball ; 90
I fell—and on the instant staggering,
He dropt beside me, with hideous yell of treachery.

DUKE. The rest I can unravel. Seeking the lady
Victoria,

Chance brought us to the spot to save this ancient man ;
My servants saw the murderer descend. We found a
vaulted passage,
And followed strait. Near to its foot,
Within a narrow opening, lay Lord Florian speechless ;
And by him one that in extremest agony,
Did seem to labour with some heavy secret ;
He reared his dying hand, and pointing to a niche, 100
Motioned to search beneath the pedestal ;
Within whose hollow body crouched we found
Yon trembling miscreant, and dragged him forth ;
The other raised a scream of horrid joy,
Pointing to the life's blood that stream'd from forth his
side,

Through the hind ribs ignobly pierced. With such a stare
As might appal the bravest, th' accusing eye
Was fix'd upon yon wretch, and thus he died.

CAR. What devilish shape hath cased itself in fashion
of a man,

To work this horrid deed ? 110

DUKE. Alas ! I've more to tell. This paper, found
upon the corpse,

Doth name him the base plotter of Victoria's flight,
The fiend that wrought against Olivia's life.

CAR. I've heard enough. Now Lernia is revenged.
What, villain, dost thou grin upon the ruin thou hast
made !

FLO. Oh, life is parting. Thou treasure of my heart,

Death opes the gate to our eternal union.

Sir, if you pity one your daughter held most dear,
When her freed soul shall quit this house of clay,
Oh let one grave receive our ashes, [one humble stone
Record our loves, our sorrows and our hope.]

Olivia—

[Dies.

FIRST NOBLE. Go, take yon villain to the prison,
To wait the awful judgment of the law.

CAR. Monster, with every sin upon thy head,
Go howling to the gulf, where pardon never entered.
Die, all-accursed as thou art.

ANG. And thou, live on—'tis all the harm Count
Lernia wishes thee.

[He is led off.

CAR. Lern—

[He falls senseless.

OLIV. (*hanging over FLORIAN'S body.*) Why, poor
Robin, thou art very cold;

What, wilt not sing to-day, sweet Robin?

BON. (*raising CARANTINI.*) 'Twere best remove him
from this piercing sight.

OLIV. (*to the Duke.*) Harkee, my lord, if you pile gold
enough

To reach remotest Saturn, you'll be e'en such
As this at last; and all your residue
Shall scarcely fetch a groat to fatten crows.

CAR. (*recovering.*) Delayed so long, 'tis doubly armed
with power

To wake remorse, a hornet to the mind.

OLIV. Ha! where is he fled?—Signor, my Florian
Is gone abroad; your worship knows not whither.
Is he here, or here? What cruel fate has parted us?

[She rushes to the front of the stage.

Oh, no, no, no—I see him, mine eyes behold him !
 Look, sir, in yon bright cloud, see how benign his aspect,
 And in his hand a wreath of hyacinth.
 Mark how he points aloft, the while his arm upheld
 (*She traces a circle with her hand.*) Describes a boundless
 day.

I come, I come, where we shall part no more.
 My father—oh, my father !

[*She hangs round his neck and dies.*

CAR. (*bending over the dead body.*) My child, Olivia :
 Would I had died for thee, my child, my child.

The Curtain drops to solemn music.

Ent. Lghts. 150. S. H. Bloom.

L. Lghts. 144. J. Maggs.

L. Thrs 101.

*Ent. Lghts. 34
 Ep. 34 with gen
 Ep. 44 with gen
 Ph 34*

*J. H. Everett
 Oct 28.
 1/47*

THE END.

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